

catalyst

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by [angelbeachcat](#)

Summary

Predestined to spend his life preserving the purity of magic from muggles according to everyone around him, it seems right that Dream has found his place beside Tom Riddle at Hogwarts. When he crosses paths with George, Ravenclaw's muggleborn seeker who's taken a liking to him, he's forced to reconsider everything he knows about the world.

Notes

Tom Riddle attended Hogwarts from 1938-1945. This work takes place in 1944-1945, during his seventh year, having already created two Horcruxes. He also began to cultivate a group of like-minded followers in this time to assist him who also came from pure-blood supremacist backgrounds. This work is canon compliant.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Chapter 1

The Hogwarts Express is cold this morning.

Dream stares out the window, watching the hills roll into the distance. His friends are probably looking for him, but he can't be bothered to reciprocate that effort at the moment. His bones ache from exhaustion, and his back is sore; travelling with floo powder so often was catching up to him. The time zone difference doesn't do him any favours either. Usually, he'd get to England at least a week before the school year started, take the time to adjust. This year, he'd barely arrived an hour before the train left the station.

It was still five in the morning back home. He groans as he tosses his head back, places a hand over his forehead to shield his eyes from the light bleeding in through the tinted windows. He had barely managed to get any sleep before his mother and father shoved him into the fireplace, watching him with stern eyes as he came to consciousness moments before they placed a handful of the magic powder in his hands and told him to get on with it.

He wouldn't have been so tired if they hadn't attended a ball that same night. He'd barely gotten two hours to rest, and now he'd probably have Slughorn on his ass about falling asleep during the opening ceremony. Like there was anything groundbreaking about some snot-nosed eleven year old throwing their hands up in the air as they were assigned to a house. Dream scoffs internally. He knows that the rest of the Slytherins were prideful of their status, Dream didn't really see it as a brotherhood as much as he did a sleeping arrangement.

A draft somehow creeps into the room.

He shudders, pulling his coat closer to his chest. He had been lucky enough to snag an empty compartment, away from the watchful eyes of just about everybody. The last thing he needed was some first year sitting across from him, yammering on and on about how attending Hogwarts was such an *honour* and a *privilege*.

Which, to be fair, it is. Dream can't be too mean to them, even if it is just in his own head. He hates it because he sees himself in them sometimes. The version of him that was overeager, unaware of the consequences of being overenthusiastic and falling short. He clenches his jaw. The last thing he needs for himself is to start moping again.

His cat, Patches, rolls around on his lap, pawing at the end of his poorly knotted necktie. He looks down at her and she stares back, emerald eyes wide.

“What’re you thinking about?” he asks her in a whisper, smiling as she stares up at him for a moment before she resumes her attack on his uniform.

His parents had debated whether or not they even *wanted* to send him out here again. His less than satisfactory performance on the OWLs had been a great deal of conflict over the summer. In comparison to his brother, an academic overachiever with eleven OWLs who now served as the assistant to the International Relations Minister in the Magical Congress, Dream fades into the background. He didn't mind it, if he was being honest. But his brother doesn't really write home anymore, and Dream is all his parents have, whether they like it or not. *Well, they don't have much*, Dream thinks to himself bitterly, as they've made a point to remind him many times. He's only got six OWLs and no plan for the future.

Nobody believed in Dream before Tom.

Tom Riddle was a golden child dropped into the maw of tragedy, pulled out of its grasps by magic, coddled and loved and adored by professors and students alike. He has blind followers. Somehow, he's seen something in Dream.

He'd taken him under his wing after the attacks in fifth year. They had bonded over their strained relationships with their families, but Tom had given him a new perspective where he had learnt to appreciate and understand his lineage. Despite him being unable to find his place in Slytherin past a very surface level, Tom at the very least encourages him to try and connect with the others. He reminds Dream of the power of being entrusted with being sacred, something that nobody could write their way into attaining. He has no idea where he is meant to go after this year, but Tom says there is a plan for him.

He would be lying if he wasn't a little bit frightened at this.

Despite his reputation, Dream knows Tom a little closer than everyone else. He's been there to see the red in his eyes flash when he gets angry, hears the practiced speeches and the preliminary ideas he has towards restoring magic to its full glory, pulling wizards out of hiding. Dream won't lie, it sounds nice. To be able to experience the world without having to hide. Tom had gotten particularly insistent as of lately that the rest of his band of soldiers, Dream decides to call them, because he wouldn't quite justify their relationship to Tom as one akin to friendship, become more vigilant as of lately. His request for loyalty had grown into a demand for reverence. Dream knows he shouldn't think too hard about it, not when there's someone else who knows what they're doing that wants the betterment of the wizarding world more than anything else.

The door to his compartment slides open. He's snapped out of his thoughts.

He expects to see Abraxas, or Nott, or even Riddle standing at the doorway. Instead, it's a boy in Ravenclaw robes with tousled hair and an apologetic smile. There is a gray cat sitting on his shoulder. He looks familiar, but a name doesn't come to mind.

"Hello, I'm George," he says, reaching out a hand for Dream to shake. "The trolley lady told me everyone's got to sit down in a compartment for a few minutes, and I can't find my friends. I'll be out of your hair as soon as we're allowed."

Dream takes his hand and shakes it awkwardly. The boy - George - carries a briefcase in and places it on his lap as he sits parallel to Dream.

"Slytherin?" he asks, motioning towards Dream's robes.

"Obviously," Dream mutters, but this doesn't discourage George in the slightest.

"So you do talk," he says, adjusting his robes.

Dream catches a glimpse of a silver perfect badge pinned on his right. Oh fuck, not this.

He sits up straighter. George notices, looking at him with furrowed eyebrows before looking down at himself and figuring it out.

"I won't dock you points or anything for being groggy, don't worry," George says again, grinning at him.

Patches jumps off his lap and onto the table between the two of them. George's cat looks down at her, flicking its tail in George's face.

George smiles at Patches, reaching out slowly to pet her. This usually does not bode well for

strangers, and normally he wouldn't bother to warn people, but he doesn't feel like getting in trouble today.

"No, don't, she might—" Dream starts, but he stops, seeing Patches lean into George's hand.

This is a first.

"Never mind, guess she likes you," Dream finishes, looking up to see George smiling as Patches moves her head across his palm.

George's cat jumps down from his shoulder, tentatively putting its face to Patches'. Patches jumps back a little in surprise, but then steps forward towards George's cat.

George's cat looks back at Dream, then Patches, then George, and then meekly crawls back into George's lap.

"It's okay baby," George whispers, taking the cat into his arms and cradling it.

"She's socially challenged," he explains to Dream.

Dream can't help but smile at that.

"So is Patches," he admits. "She doesn't usually warm up to people like that."

They sit in silence for a few moments.

"Have you by any chance seen Riddle?" He asks. "Head boy this year?"

"We just finished our Prefects meeting, I believe he wandered off with Malfoy afterwards," George says.

Dream nods, resuming his staring out the window.

"I didn't quite catch your name?" George asks him.

"I'm Dream," Dream says. "Pleasure to meet you. Sorry for being snappy earlier, just a bit tired."

"Hello Dream, no worries at all." George smiles again, shaking his head to move the hair out of his eyes. "I'm sure you're sick of hearing this, but your accent..."

"I'm American," Dream finishes before George can even ask him. "My parents wanted me to attend Hogwarts instead of Ilvermorny. The school culture there is atrocious."

George looks at him, confused. "Really? I heard that Ilvermorny was very nice - very inclusive too."

The door slides open on their compartment and both of them turn their heads. Tom Riddle, Abraxas Malfoy and Alphard Black stand in the doorway. Abraxas and Alphard plop down on the same bench Dream is sitting at, but Tom stays standing.

"Hello George," Tom says, smiling at him brightly.

George stands up, grabbing his suitcase.

Tom glances over at Dream, eyes harsher, and Dream lets his gaze drop to the floor.

“Hello Tom, is everything okay outside?”

George’s cat slinks around his arms and perches on his shoulders again like some sort of owl.

“Everything is under control now, yes. Just a muggle engineering failure, but nothing to write home about. You’re free to move around, but by all means, stay! We were just looking for Dream here,” Riddle says, gesturing in front of him.

“No no, I’ll leave you all to it. I’ve got to find Lovegood, he’s got a quill of mine I need back,” George says, shuffling out of the compartment, and Dream finds himself oddly upset to see him go.

“Bye Tom, Abraxas...” he pauses, clearly not recognizing Alphard.

“Alphard. Alphard Black,” Tom finishes for him.

“Alphard! Thank you Tom. Goodbye Dream, thank you for being kind enough to let me intrude for a bit! Bye!” George waves to them through the glass before he hurries off.

When the door shuts, Abraxas scoffs.

“He’s a real piece of work, can’t believe he’s admitted here,” he starts, and Alphard snorts.

“I thought he was fine,” Dream says before he can think about what he’s saying.

He feels three pairs of judgmental eyes on him and regrets defending George right then and there.

“He’s a mud-blood Dream,” Alphard spits the word like it’s made of poison. “Didn’t know you associated with their kind.”

Dream’s eyes widened for a moment. No way.

“I didn’t know they made mud-bloods prefects,” Dream remarks, attempting to sound nonchalant.

“That rule was abolished in the sixteenth century,” Tom says, flicking his wrist.

The glass by their compartment door turns translucent.

“I apologize, my lord,” Dream adds, feeling his face burn in humiliation at the idea of using an honorific to refer to someone his own age.

“Fix your tie,” Tom says, thankfully not sounding mad.

George is sprinting down the length of the train, his poor cat clinging to his shoulder for dear life.

“Soot, when I catch you,” he yells, knowing fully well he is incapable of doing so on foot.

Luckily, the train car comes to an end, and Wilbur is trapped.

“C’mon George, no harm no foul,” Wilbur tries, as George points his wand up at him, fuming.

“You tried to turn me into a frog!”

“Only as a joke!” Wilbur says, throwing his hands up in mock surrender. “And I didn’t succeed! So you shouldn’t do anything.”

A few second years have started walking towards them, so George puts his wand away.

"Thank you George, you are ever so merciful," Wilbur teases as they walk back towards their compartment.

"Are you excited for Quidditch this year?" Wilbur asks, and George nods.

"Davies has been on my head about practicing, but he doesn't seem to understand that muggles might freak out if they see a man on a broomstick floating around," George says. "I've been sneaking outside to practice during the night though, hopefully it's enough. We want to go for the championship this year."

George had been Ravenclaw's seeker ever since fifth year, when Davies, the captain, caught him practicing archery. After pleading, begging and bribing George with firewhiskey, Davies had managed to convince him to join the team.

Wilbur and him talk about their summers - George, who had stayed at his grandparents, and went to Davies' house for Quidditch boot camp, and Wilbur who had been travelling around Eastern Asia.

They had written back and forth quite often, but were unfortunately unable to schedule some time to meet up.

"I'm so glad the attacks from last year have stopped," Wilbur says, and George feels his heart ache.

A girl in his house - Myrtle - had been found dead in the second floor bathrooms. It had been a very difficult year, with talks of the school being shut down altogether. Lucky for them, Tom Riddle had managed to capture the creature responsible. George was grateful for him; he doesn't think he could go back to muggle schooling after experiencing all this.

"Heard Slytherin's thinking of getting a new keeper," George says. "Any news?"

Wilbur often provided commentary during the games and could give George exclusive information. To his surprise, Wilbur shakes his head no.

"They're planning on redoing the whole team, word on the block," Wilbur says.

"That's ridiculous - they won last year!" George argues, but Wilbur shrugs.

"Still not good enough for them, apparently."

The train comes to a stop. Wilbur takes George's suitcase for him and makes him promise they'll see each other after the feast before George runs off to the dock to help the first years onto the boats.

He sees Riddle break off from Alphard, Abraxas and Dream.

"There's about three more boatloads of them coming after this," Riddle says as George gives the green light for one more of the boats to leave.

"There's so many of them," George groans, and Riddle laughs.

"The price of allowing everyone admission to Hogwarts," Riddle says, holding out his arm. "I've told Malfoy to handle it now, don't you worry. Come, let's get a carriage."

George takes the outstretched hand helping him back onto solid ground. He sits across from Riddle

and next to a newly appointed Hufflepuff prefect with unruly red hair.

“I’m so excited,” she says, smiling at George and then Tom.

Tom smiles back at her.

“Of course. I have a feeling this year will be to die for.”

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The next time Dream sees George is in the library.

“Is this seat taken?” George asks, smiling the same way he did on the train.

Dream glances up at him and stares blankly for a few moments, before slowly shaking his head.

“Thank you, Dream, was it?” he asks while he sits down.

Dream lets out an irritated exhale and stares daggers at George this time. George raises his eyebrows, amused for a moment, before shrugging and going to pull a neatly rolled scroll out of his satchel.

He’s unable to focus now, not with the scribbling noise of George’s quill creating an irritating sensation in the back of his mind. He sighs loudly, shifting himself so his shoulder is facing George instead of his whole body. It’s a petty display, he realizes, but he isn’t obligated to be nice to him.

On the contrary, actually. If anything, George owes him.

George’s kind has robbed him of so much. Muggles.

His mother had told him the stories every night before bed as a child, etched them into his home curriculum so he would never forget.

Wizards had attempted to do good for the muggles with their magic, and were met with hostility and ruthlessness in response. Regardless, wizarding forces in the past had refused to use magic against them. Muggles had put witches and wizards on wooden stakes and attempted to burn them alive, forcing them into hiding, like field mice when the farmer’s cat came out to play.

Magic ministries and governments had grown cowardly, opting for magic to exist out of plain sight for the comfort of those that did not possess it.

Dream knows. He knows what happened to his great grandparents, knows what happened to wizards that attempted to put too much faith in those that did not understand what magic was. It was their fault that magic had to evolve to have twisted uses today. Dark magic, as Dream understands it, is self defence.

It guards and protects his right to be who he is. It is forged inside his veins, in his blood. He will do whatever it takes to protect it, regardless of how painful that reality may soon look like.

And people like George, who waltzed into Hogwarts like none of that history mattered.

Who had gotten lucky enough to be born into a life with less responsibility, to have the choice to opt into the sacred practices that had dire consequences for Dream’s and countless others’ families in the past.

It is disgraceful.

There is a meeting tonight near the forbidden forest. Dream knows it is for the greater good, knows

he is working towards a cause that will protect witches and wizards. Still, he is human, and he is afraid.

Tom is intense sometimes; increasingly so at the end of last year. Charming and mellow during daylight, but something unhinged can be caught in the glint in his eyes during the later hours.

He sneaks a glance at George, who was printing exceptionally slow. He watches him for a moment; the way he holds his pen (left handed, Dream notes, *the devil's hand*). He presses down heavy when he dots his "i"s.

George seems to feel his eyes on him, glancing up at Dream and flushing pink.

"Are you into Quidditch, Dream?" George asks, and Dream feels himself turn red at the question.

This mudblood? Asking him if he's into Quidditch? He's probably known about Quidditch longer than George has known about broomsticks.

"I suppose, it isn't my favourite pastime, however," Dream responds before he can stop himself.

"Oh really?" George asks, pleased that they're making some sort of conversation.

He leans forward, as if Dream's possible hobbies are the most interesting thing in the world.

"What do you do in your free time?"

Dream wants to sink the point of his wand into this man's neck and force him away. George is too close; he can see the freckles scattered across his nose from here.

"None of your business," Dreams responds shortly, closing his book.

He shoves his things into his backpack, opting to walk away before George attempts to insult him any further. Like George, like any muggleborn, would ever exist on the same level as him.

George outscores you on every magic test. He's got nearly double the number of OWLs you have. Poor Dream. Born into shoes he could never grow into.

The thought sneaks into his mind in a whisper. His stomach turns inside out, suddenly nauseous.

Some mudblood outperforming you in magic, Dream. Does it disturb you?

The whisper grows sharper, louder.

What would your father say if he knew?

Searing hot pain sits behind his eyes and he stumbles. He wishes his mind would stop, wishes these thoughts away, but he doesn't know how.

"Dream?"

Tom's voice breaks him out of the panicked state his mind was in.

"Tom," Dream says, swallowing hard. "Hello."

Tom observes him carefully, dark eyes boring into Dream's skull. It feels like his thoughts are pieces of paper being scattered around haphazardly in an attempt to find something. Finally Tom breaks the intense staring match by glancing at him up and down.

“You will be at the forest today, I presume,” Tom states.

He never asks anymore, but Dream supposes he forfeited his right to be asked the second he agreed to become a soldier in Tom’s design.

“Of course. I just have to get some homework done before,” Dream says, motioning towards his bag.

“I don’t know why you bother, Dream,” Tom says, and Dream’s heart sinks heavy in his chest.

He doesn’t know how he’s supposed to take Tom taunting him for his poor performance in classes. It isn’t even so much of a taunt as it is an observation.

Tom does that, to get under people’s skin. He says things so blatantly wrong with them to their faces instead of whispering about it. It is terrifying, but he isn’t in the position to be criticizing him.

Tom motions for Dream to lean closer, and Dream obliges.

“You’re far smarter than this school’s shoddy excuse of a curriculum. Don’t worry about your grades. You and your family will be provided for after everything is said and done.”

Dream knows that Tom could very easily be lying to him. Tom could toss him aside like a used handkerchief once his plan was done. But still, Tom was the only person he knew that attempted to try and understand him and his unique struggles.

He thinks of his parents and tries to visualize them beaming with pride, proudly claiming Dream as their son. He sees his father at the breakfast table reading The Daily Prophet while his mother busies over the tea kettle. He sees himself walking into the kitchen and their eyes lighting up with delight. His father clasps a hand over his shoulder and asks Dream what his prerogative is for the day.

Tom draws his wand and presses it into Dream’s forehead.

“Do you trust me?” He demands, and Dream closes his eyes and nods, hoping that the lack of sight will make this situation less terrifying.

He knows Tom wouldn’t kill him here, but if he did, he’s certain nobody would ever find Dream’s body.

Tom mutters something under his breath, before removing his wand.

“Go finish your work, do not be late for tonight,” Tom repeats, before turning around and walking away, robes billowing behind him as he calls the name of the head girl.

When Dream gets to his dorm and starts his paper, the words come considerably easier. He writes and writes until his wrist is numb. Evening falls, and he is finishing up the paper due next Friday when he realizes what has happened.

Tom has put a focussing charm on him.

He never got good with those, the wand movements too finicky for his liking.

That was very kind of him, Dream thinks as he walks out of his dorm room and into the corridors. He sees Malfoy and Black too, and he jogs a little to catch up to them.

“Be very quiet,” Malfoy reminds him. “Riddle hates it when we get too loud.”

Dream feels his blood run cold at the idea of being on the receiving end of Tom's frustration. It has never happened to him before, but he had witnessed it enough times to not be curious as to what the consequences may be.

When they get to the tree marked with a silver snake, they wait. Dream feels his eyes grow heavy; he wants to sleep, but he knows he can't.

Tom speaks to them about leaving Hogwarts, how their academic careers will draw to a close. He speaks of going off the grid, to obscure parts of Europe. Then, his expression grows dark.
“Should any of you feel that you are not strong enough for this life, come to me and I will be merciful. Should you desert me-”

Tom's eyes run over their faces.

“The consequences will be less pleasant.”

Dream feels scared for a moment. He hates himself for it.

Tom dismisses them in rounds to make their way back into the castle.

Dream's luck runs very thin when he hears footsteps down the corridor he needs to be in.

He curses under his breath and draws his wand under his cloak.

He needs an out.

“Hello?” A girl's voice calls out. “Who goes there?”

Dream stays dangerously still and wishes that she chooses to go the opposite direction, but the footsteps get louder.

He needs an out.

He takes a deep breath, hastily attempts to put a silencing spell on his boots, and sprints down the hallways and disappears around the bend.

To his luck, the spell has worked. The footsteps go in the opposite direction.

He needs an out.

A door appears behind him.

The Room of Requirement reads the golden plaque above the peephole.

He doesn't have time to think, because the footsteps are getting closer again. He throws open the door and shuts it, feeling his heart beat erratically in his chest.

He takes a moment to ground himself before he turns around and looks at the objects in the room.

There are a handful of novels stacked onto a chair sitting in the middle, but more importantly, there's a cloak in the corner covering a shaking object.

Dream points his wand at the keyhole of the door and mutters “Colloportus,” before pointing it at the cloak.

“Show yourself,” he commands, willing his voice to sound braver than he feels.

He expects a disfigured creature or evil being to slither out from underneath there, a hideous face to hiss and bare its fangs at him before it tries to kill him.

Instead, the cloak slowly pulls down to reveal the face of the Ravenclaw kid that he can't seem to get rid of.

George.

His eyes are wide as they flicker between Dream's wand and Dream's face. His cheeks are flushed red and his chest heaves up and down behind the cloak.

"What are you doing here?" Dream hisses, stepping forward, but George cowers back, holding up a hand to cover his face.

When George doesn't answer his question, Dream takes a deep breath.

"Alright. Put both your hands up, then," Dream tries.

He watches George swallow hard, but he adjusts the cloak around himself before lifting his other hand.

"Remove the cloak," Dream says, stepping forward, to which George vehemently shakes his head.

"I'm not- I don't have my shirt on," George says, voice shaky. "Dream, how'd you find this room?"

Dream doesn't feel like answering to him, but George hardly seems like a threat right now.

"It appeared," Dream answered shortly.

"I can explain it to you," George offers. "If you just give me a moment to button my shirt."

Dream exhales loudly.

"You have twenty seconds. I know how to duel, don't try anything," he warns, to which George nods to. "Toss me your wand."

George's eyes flicker to the foot of the chair, where his wand is lying on the floor. Dream summons it and holds it in his hand as he turns around.

He's only counted to ten when he turns around to ensure George is still doing as he's told.

He has never been a particularly sympathetic person but he gasps loudly at what he sees. George's back muscles tense as he turns quickly, facing Dream. He looks like a deer caught in headlights. It doesn't matter though, the damage is done.

Dream is at a loss for words. He could lose his vision or his memory the next day. The strongest wizard in the world could have obliviated him.

He still doesn't think he could forget the way the two large, infected gashes stretched across the expanse of George's back looked.

It's gruesome in a way Dream has never seen before.

"Dream, please," George starts, the words coming out shaky as tears well up in his eyes.

Dream doesn't know what George is pleading for.

Chapter End Notes

hope everyone is doing good, and as always comments and feedback are super appreciated :)

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“You said you wouldn’t look,” George says, breathing heavily.

His eyes are wide and mad and his arm shakes as he points at Dream accusingly. “You said!”

Dream doesn’t know what to say.

“What the hell happened to you?” Dream asks, stepping forward.

He pockets both of their wands, and George steps away from him again.

He’s never seen George like this; granted, they really have only known each other for a few weeks, and seen each other in passing, but still. The image is all wrong.

When he thinks of George, he sees him grinning and engaging in small talk in a manner that, while irritating to Dream, could be seen as endearing to someone else. His hair is always neatly combed, he’s always surrounded by people in the hallways, laughing loudly. He’s well liked, popular even.

Right now, he’s backed into the corner of this room, trembling like a rabid animal that’s wounded.

“George,” Dream asks again, willing his voice to be less sharp.

“It’s nothing,” George mutters. “I can heal it myself, I was until you got here.”

George takes a deep breath, grounding himself, and moves the cloak to reveal a glass bottle with red shimmering liquid. “Healing potions.”

“Why don’t you go to the infirmary?” Dream presses.

“They’d ask too many questions,” George responds. “Speaking of, why are *you* here right now?”

Dream sighs.

“What if we both agree to not ask any more questions about each other?” he offers.

George seems to like the sound of that.

“Can you at least tell me what this place is?” Dream asks, and George nods enthusiastically.

“Sure, sure, if I can just finish bandaging up,” he explains.

Dream nods and steps aside, giving George space, but can’t bring himself to tear his eyes away from him out of morbid curiosity. George turns red when he realizes this, but doesn’t say anything in protest, just turns around so his back is facing Dream. He takes off the shirt - now spotted with a primrose shadow of where the laceration met fabric.

Dream gets a closer look at the shape of the cut. It’s a cross; it travels down George’s spine shallowly, while the one parallel to his shoulder blades runs deeper. It makes Dream feel dizzy.

“My wand, Dream,” George says quietly, and Dream wordlessly hands it to him.

George flicks his wrist and says an incantation Dream vaguely recognises as he points his wand at the healing potion. The red liquid rises out of the bottle, and George flicks his wand over his shoulder. The potion sits on top of the wound.

“I have to wrap it,” George says. “There’s gauze on the chair.”

Dream blinks back to reality, and moves to get the bandages. He’s shaking when he turns around again to look at George’s back. There is something so sinister about the precision in the two cuts.

He unravels a small section of it, and absentmindedly steps in front of George, looping it around his waist.

George inhales sharply and turns so he’s no longer facing him. “You don’t have to do that.”

“Well how do you plan to reach?” Dream snaps, and George rolls his eyes.

“Magic Dream, have you heard of it?” He asks.

It’s the first display of contempt George has shown towards him and it makes Dream feel better about hating him.

He’s supposed to hate him, he remembers. It’s very hard to feel hateful towards someone that so far has done nothing but be nice to you even after you purposefully try to let them know you don’t like them. He watches George utter the same spell again, and the roll of gauze unravels and wraps itself around George’s back and chest.

George pockets his wand and ties the bandage, tucking the loose end in.

“This is the room of requirement, I stumbled upon it while I was trying to find somewhere to study for the OWLs,” George says. “It appears if someone needs a place to go, and they think about it three times. What I don’t get is how you got in while I was in here. I did some reading up on it, and you can only access it while someone else is inside if you know the reason that person is in there.”

Dream shrugs. “There was a prefect on my ass, and I needed a place to hide.”

“I didn’t come here to hide from a prefect,” George says.

It’s silent.

“Weird,” Dream notes.

“Does magic ever glitch?” George asks him hesitantly. “I’m a muggleborn, so I’m not exactly...”

Ah, so Riddle and Black and Malfoy were not lying. George really is a muggleborn. Strangely enough, he’s so jittery and anxious right now, that Dream can’t exactly bring himself to be judgemental towards him. He’s sure he’ll have other opportunities, but now feels wrong.

“It can, but typically things charmed the same way this room is don’t experience those. Unless someone casted one of the charms poorly.”

George nods. “Good to know, thank you.”

He doesn’t want to be here any longer incase George starts trying to pick him apart and Dream accidentally lets slip of anything he’s not supposed to. He doesn’t say goodnight or goodbye, just turns around and struts towards the door.

His hand is on the door handle when George speaks.

"This corridor is patrolled very heavily at this hour. I wouldn't go out there right now," George says nervously. "If you want we can sit here and talk? Around seven thirty is a good time to leave. The house elves are out, but they don't really mind or tattle. Besides, I'd—" George pauses, like he's considering the different ways he could end his statement. "I'd like to get to know you, Dream."

Dream almost laughs, but stops himself at the hopeful expression in George's eyes.

"Why?" He finds himself asking. "I'm kind of a prat towards you."

George laughs a little at that. "Maybe, yeah. I just think you're cool."

Cool. Definitely not a word he thinks anyone here would choose to describe him with. Brooding, introverted, maybe even mysterious if he was being put under public surveillance. All he does is sit quietly with the Slytherins at lunch and spend the rest of the time in his room, ignoring his homework and working on spells he likes.

"Cool," he repeats, amused. "Me, George?"

George nods, flushing pink again. "Yeah. You don't like- bother entertaining things you don't want to. It's cool, wish I could do that."

The last part is whispered like he's ashamed of it.

"Have you been watching me?" Dream teases, just to watch George shake his head no furiously.

"No! I mean, not you in particular. I'm just observant in general, I think," George says.

Observant, Dream notes. Out of all the words he would use to describe George, that's admittedly not the first one that comes to mind. George perceives himself differently than what he portrays himself as.

"You're more irritating than observant," Dream remarks, and George rolls his eyes again.

"You're more of a jerk than you are cool," George bites back, but it lacks passion.

"You play Quidditch, yes? How long?" Dream asks, sitting down on the floor.

George seems pleased Dream remembers this tidbit of information.

"Yeah! I've been playing for fun since second year, with Wilbur - the guy that commentates the matches - but I've only been on the team since fifth year."

Dream nods in acknowledgement.

"Have you played? Or do you play outside of school teams?" George asks.

"I've been playing for fun since I was a kid, with my brother and such," Dream tells him. "Never really wanted to be on the team though. Takes up a lot of time."

"It does," George agrees. "But I'm sure you'd be good at it. You're like—"

He motions towards Dream's body.

"You're well built," George says.

A beat. Dream feels his heart stop for a second, caught off guard by the compliment.

"Careful now, you gotta buy me a drink before you go saying stuff like that," Dream chuckles out.

George goes pink again. "Don't say it like that, Dream."

"Why?" Dream breathes out, leaning forward to see what George will do.

His Slytherin friends get pissed off when he flirts with them, even as a joke. He doesn't quite get it - perhaps it's a cultural difference. His American friends think its quite funny.

George swallows hard and shakes his head no.

"Alright," Dream says, lolling his head to the side tiredly as he looks up at George. "At least you let me down easy."

"Don't be stupid," George mutters.

Another brief silence, but it's more comfortable.

"I wish I could've done that," George admits.

Dream shoots into a sitting position, suddenly at full attention. "What? Flirt with me?"

"No, you idiot," George says. "Grown up playing Quidditch, with magic and things."

Dream tenses.

"My family's religious, so I didn't really get an opportunity to formulate my own ideas as to what magic was before I found out I had it," George continues. "Would have been nice to understand what was going on."

Dream swallows hard. This is George's struggle - feeling out of place. Dream understands to an extent, but he'd argue the fear of being caught and burnt at the stake is worse than that.

"Sorry," George says quietly. "Was that too much? I just, I don't mean to complain. I know people have had it a lot worse. I just wish I understood it all. I'm sure you do."

Dream clears his throat. "Honestly, not an exclusively muggleborn thing," he says. "I didn't show too many signs of being magic until I was a lot older."

"It's so strange," George gushes out. "Magic. I don't even- I can't even wrap my head around it sometimes. It's got so many uses, and yet so many limitations, I just can't conceptualize it sometimes."

Dream understands how he feels. George seems, at the very least, appreciative and aware of the value of magic. A lot of muggleborns are not - they see it as some fun little party trick.

Dream groans internally. There's no getting rid of George now, not when Dream resonates so deeply with his perspectives. He supposes outliers to every group exist.

"It has to be protected," Dream says finally.

George nods his head in agreement.

Some part of Dream that he's attempted to bury deep inside himself, desperate for approval and for someone to understand, absolutely glows.

"Why did you come back to the dorms so late last night?" Alphard whispers to Dream, who struggles to keep his eyes open as History of Magic class begins.

"Almost got caught by a prefect, had to hide in a closet," Dream says. "They were patrolling the corridors all night."

Alphard's eyebrows furrowed in confusion. "No they don't. Riddle dismissed us right as their shift ended."

"Huh," Dream says absentmindedly. "Guess they decided to patrol longer for some reason yesterday."

Alphard drops the topic and cranes his neck to better see the board. Dream sneaks a glance at George, who sits two benches ahead of him. He's furiously scribbling notes, going through his scroll like it's nobody's business. He looks confused for a moment, leaning back and tilting his head at something he's written, before shaking his head and crossing out two lines.

George may have stretched the truth to get a chance to talk to Dream, Dream notes, but he doesn't feel upset about this development at all.

He likes George, he's decided. He's considerate and funny and doesn't think Dream is a loser.

George seems to feel Dream's eyes on him and turns around, turning red when he catches Dream looking. George smiles and gives a shy wave, to which Dream raises his eyebrows to, but can't help but smile back at.

There is no need for Tom, or any of his friends to know about this. For all they care, Dream is upholding appearances. It's not like Tom is going to be furious and demand he kill George in cold blood. Their plan is to get rid of muggles from the wizarding world, not get rid of muggles.

His mind wanders and thinks of George's place in the war, wondering what George would think of him. Then he shakes those thoughts away. There is still time and he's only known George for a few days.

He'll cross that bridge when he gets to it, he tells himself, hoping it satiates the guilt in his chest.

Chapter End Notes

i hate the word chuckle but i used it here. thank you all for the support on the last

chapter!!

comments and feedback are super appreciated!! thank you once again for reading :)

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

After that day, Dream finds himself making up reasons to talk to George.

It started simple - needing help with potions theory and Riddle and them being too busy, offering broomstick care tips in exchange, offering an opportunity for Patches to socialize with George's cat because she doesn't usually like people.

George never said no to him - he'd smile and make time and move his schedule around for Dream and it makes Dream feel soft in a way he never has before with his other friends.

Eventually, they stop making excuses. George asks him upfront to hangout, and Dream lies to people about where he's going. They meet in the room of requirement. Dream says it is for convenience, but he knows that George is aware that he doesn't like being seen in public with him. He never brings it up though, and they settle into a neat routine, where Dream comes early to set up the area so it's comfortable and George always walks in ten minutes late and a fist full of snacks he's taken from the kitchens.

His friends were bound to find out at some point.

"Seen you walking around with that Ravenclaw prefect a lot," Abraxas tells him one evening in the common room.

It's deserted aside from the two of them.

"I need potions help," Dream defends himself, guilt sitting heavy in his stomach.

"You can always ask Tom," Abraxas argues, and Dream shakes his head no.

"Tom is so busy, I wouldn't want to bother him," Dream reasons. "He probably has a million other things to tend to."

"Why wouldn't you want to bother me, Dream?" Tom's voice calls out from behind him, and Dream feels the dread release itself into his bloodstream.

Abraxas sneers at him before he speaks up.

"Dream's getting comfortable with a mudblood, Tom," he announces, giddy with excitement at the idea of being a rat. "Goes and sees him on his own time for *potions*, supposedly."

Tom holds up a hand for Abraxas to stop, but he ignores him and continues.

"Going for help from somebody who's less magic than you. Where's your shame, Dream? What would Salazar say?"

"Enough," Tom says sharply. "I don't recall asking for a dissection of Dream's life story, Malfoy."

Abraxas shrinks at the venom in his voice, and Dream is grateful for a fleeting second. Then, Tom motions for Abraxas to leave the two of them alone. Dream feels his blood run cold again, swallowing hard as he hears the door click shut.

Tom turns more towards him, and Dream drops his gaze to the floor.

“Am I in trouble?” he whispers, feeling like a child about to be reprimanded.

“Why would you be?” Tom counters his question, adjusting himself on an adjacent seat.

Dream shrugs. Because Abraxas is technically right, and Dream finds himself thinking of George as his closest friend despite only knowing him for a few weeks. But George has that effect on a lot of people, he’s sure. Dream isn’t used to being pursued out for intelligent conversation, being treated as an equal. He’s brushed off as academically challenged by everyone aside from Tom and George.

The way George reacts to his quirks and mean spirited jokes in such a sweet and clever manner is ridiculously enjoyable. He’s sure he’s not the only one that feels this way. His life is complicated right now, and George serves as a fantastic distraction from all of it. He means distraction in a reasonably affectionate way - however reasonably affectionate you can feel towards a muggleborn.

“Speaking to muggleborns is not a crime. Abraxas does not understand sometimes,” Tom goes on to explain. “People are complex, multidimensional. George may be a perfectly fine mudblood-”

Dream winces internally at the word but does not show it.

“-but Dream, you’ve got to remember what him being here means in the grand scheme of things. George is responsible for the downfall of our people,” Tom reminds him.

“I know, Tom. Just need some potions help from him is all - don’t wanna bother you and he’s semi decent. I haven’t met too many muggle borns in my lifetime, so I was curious about how that is, that’s all. No reason to worry,” Dream explains, and Tom nods, unbothered.

“Not worried about you, nor do I doubt your loyalties, Dream. Nott on the other hand, is getting suspiciously cozy with that Hufflepuff girl. If you find out anything about his situation, do keep me updated,” Tom notes.

“Oh, are you, uh- do you fancy her, Tom?” Dream sputters out.

Tom laughs.

“No no, just want to ensure she feels welcome with all of us in case she and Nott are getting...familiar with each other.”

Oh. Oh.

“What about you Dream, have your eye on any of these girls?” Tom goads him, and Dream internally panics.

“Uh, Parkinson is fit. Amelie Parkinson. She’s pretty,” Dream says the first Slytherin name he thinks of.

“Hm,” Tom says. “Good to know.”

A moment of silence falls on the two of them.

“I’m going to bed now,” Dream announces. “Unless, you need anything done at this hour for you, my lord.”

Tom shakes his head no. “That will be all.”

“Davies,” George whispers, tossing a pillow at his head in the dark.

A groan follows. The middle of the night is perhaps not the best time to have this conversation, but he’s slightly afraid of Davies’s reaction to this news in the daytime.

Besides, part of the benefit of sleeping in the same room is being available for each other at the drop of a hat all the time, right?

“What’s the time, George?” Davies slurs out.

“It’s only twelve in the morning,” George states. “I just wanted your opinion on something.”

He hears the bed shift as Davies makes himself comfortable.

“Go on then,” Davies says, fatigue evident in his voice.

“There’s a...there’s somebody,” George admits, feeling himself go red at the admission. “I think. Potentially.”

“Oh?” Davies sits up now, interested in this development. “Who’s the lucky individual?”

“Uh, you can’t tell anyone,” George reminds him.

He’s sure that if this got out he wouldn’t hear the end of it. And it isn’t like it means anything at all, since George isn’t exactly sure if Dream feels the same way as him at all.

“You’ve got my word, now spit it out,” Davies presses, and George knows he’s getting impatient so he finally does.

“Y’know Dream? Slytherin kid, super tall,” George starts, and Davies immediately shakes his head no.

“Bad idea, he hangs out with Malfoy and them,” Davies starts, but George cuts him off.

“I know, but he also hangs out around Riddle! And he’s- don’t look at me like that! He’s very sweet!”

“Have you held an actual conversation with him? George, I love you, but you know he seems like very much of a- he’s a bit of an American. Got a bit of a mouth on him, doesn’t care too much about school. He’s from a big pureblooded family in America too, so I don’t imagine their attitudes are exactly modern.”

George sighs, feeling upset at the lack of support.

“He’s really nice! And we do talk, actually. Just not in public,” George mutters.

Davies raises a brow and George knows what he’s saying because George has been through it before, but that didn’t make it less painful of a truth to deal with.

“We’re just friends. Be happy for me, for finding new friends,” George pleads, grasping at straws.

“His cat really likes mine, too!”

“George, I don’t mean to make you feel bad, but just be careful. Make sure he’s not there for the wrong reasons, yeah? And make sure he doesn’t hate queer people,” Davies reminds him. “If he’s making you happy, and isn’t being horrible to you-”

“He’s not!” George interrupts. “He’s making me happy, I mean. He’s not being horrible to me. He’s very nice.”

“Then I’m happy for you,” Davies says, grinning at him. “Let me know if he gives you any problems, yeah? I can take him.”

Davies punches the air twice to make a point and George laughs.

“Alright, *Manuel Ortiz*, calm down,” George snorts.

“Who’s that?” Davies asks, confused.

“Famous boxer,” George says as he rolls over to go back to bed more comfortably.

“What’s boxing?”

“That looks like an airplane!” George tells Dream, pointing at the sketch.

Him and Dream are sat in the room of requirement again at an ungodly hour. It’s a Friday night, so they indulge themselves and decide to stay out all night. George is nervous. He’s never been out all night with someone, but Dream is collected so George tries to mirror his energy.

Today Dream has set up the room as a library, with a ridiculously large pillow in the middle that they’re both sitting on. Dream talks about charms and transfiguration, admitting that those two are his favourite subjects. He talks about how he does his own work with those in his free time and it’s the reason he can’t be all too bothered with other subjects.

Dream has figured out how to charm his doodles so they dance around the borders of his page, but stay away from the words. He’s even figured out how to doodle little creatures that rearrange the letters of words spelt incorrectly, and make his handwriting more legible. He’s showing George those today.

George runs his finger across the page in wonder.

“What’s an airplane?” Dream murmurs, shifting closer so their sides are pressed together.

“Oh, muggle thing,” George says, embarrassed. “It’s not nearly as cool as Floo powder, or anything, but it’s a developing technology. It’s like a cart you can get on that goes through the sky.”

George picks up a quill and hesitantly presses it to the page.

“Can I show you?” he asks, and Dream nods, leaning closer towards the page.

George feels his breathing on his fingers, and they shake as he attempts to draw with the quill.

"Uh, I-can you hand me a book, please? To balance the scroll on," George explains.

Dream nods, leaning away from him to grab a book off the shelf and placing it on his lap. George shifts, trying to place his hand comfortably on the scroll to draw.

"You need an easel to sketch?" Dream says teasingly, and George feels himself go red again.

"It's hard, I'm left handed," he says, but he can't help but smile.

Dream turns around so his back is to George. "Go on then."

George freezes, feeling his heart rate start to pick up. "What?"

Dream laughs - it's a gentle sound, and sits comfortable at the top of George's brain. "Well, unless you can manifest one out of thin air, I'm the best you've got."

George swallows hard, and places the page on Dream's back. He holds the quill in his mouth as he balances the ink pot on the book.

He dips the tip of the ink quill into the pot, and with gentle strokes sketches an airplane. It isn't nearly as well developed as Dream's drawings. It feels like an intimate gesture; he can feel Dream taking air into his lungs underneath the palm he's using to balance himself on Dream's shoulder.

He removes the scroll and Dream turns to see it.

"Don't laugh!" he prefaces, and Dream doesn't.

He runs a finger across the bridge of the wings, and then takes the scroll and tucks it away to the side.

"It's nice," he finally says.

George shifts so that they're sitting close again, and Dream moves away onto his knees. George feels his heart sink for a moment, and then Dream speaks.

"My turn," he says. "I'm gonna draw something magic, you gotta guess what it is."

George complies, twisting himself around and begs himself to stop shaking as a fresh scroll makes contact with his back.

Dream's quill is barely there; like a ghost is running its fingernails around his back, connecting imaginary dots.

He feels the quill on his upper shoulder and it burns. He hisses, shifting away, and he feels Dream remove the paper immediately.

"Did I hurt you?" he asks, and George shouldn't feel as touched as he does at the concern in Dream's eyes.

He shakes his head no. "Just, old wounds, y'know," he says, and Dream presses his lips together like he wants to say something.

He can still see the wound sometimes when he closes his eyes - clean lines, intersecting on George's back parallel to where his heart is on the other side of his torso.

"Are they healing alright?" Dream asks, instead of the thing he's really wondering.

George knows he's curious, but he doesn't want to talk about it. He's sure that once he starts, he'll get emotional and end up scaring Dream away.

"They're healing fine, don't worry. You can keep going, you're really gentle," he admits.

Dream looks at him and offers a knowing smile, but doesn't press on the topic any further.

"Alright then, turn around."

George turns back again, biting down on his tongue to prevent himself from making the same mistake as before.

Dream bites his tongue too, so he doesn't end up asking questions that George won't answer.

Chapter End Notes

thank you for reading! as always, your thoughts in the comments are very appreciated
:)

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Dream walks through the forbidden forest. A hood is drawn over his head and the cold metal of a mask presses into his skin as he trudges forward, surrounded by ten other individuals doing the same. His cloak billows in the wind as they approach a clearing. Wordlessly, the individuals scatter to form a ring. Dream follows them, taking his place in the circle as well. He feels uneasy; mouth dry and head on fire. He turns to someone beside him and means to ask what they're doing here, but no noise comes out of his mouth.

Suddenly, all the figures drop to their knees. Dream drops to his knees too, glancing through the holes in the mask to see another hooded figure fly over them and place himself in the center of the circle.

"You may rise," the figure calls, voice shrill and haunting, and Dream clamours to his feet at the same time as everyone else.

A pale, almost translucent hand extends from the figure in the middle, clutching a thin wand. Dream feels his heart stop when the wand points to him.

"You," the figure calls, voice being carried by the wind. "Step forward."

So Dream does. He extends a leg, and then the other, and then the other until he's standing in front of the figure. Then, by instinct, he drops to his knees in front of it.

"You have been most loyal, Dream," the voice says. "Look up at me."

A hand pulls the hood off of Dream's head, and then removes the mask from his face. Dream watches it fall to the floor with a thud. A thumb and index finger grip his chin and lift his face to the hooded figure above him.

The figure drops his own hood and Dream's heart leaps up in his chest. Tom Riddle stands above him. He's still handsome, but his skin is a sallow shade of marble. His pupils take up the majority of space in his eyes; dark-black and sinister.

"My lord," Dream finally breathed out, unable to stop himself from shaking.

The wind whistles hauntingly around them, like it knows what's going to happen.

"Don't be afraid," Tom says. "You know I've always had a bit of a soft spot for you, despite your incompetence in school."

Dream wants to close his eyes and be removed from this place, but instead he bites down on his tongue as hard as he can to force himself to stay present.

"You've been a critical part in shaping our victory. I've got a gift for you today actually. Pure luck, the way this has played out," Tom continues.

He waves an arm, and Dream is lifted to his feet. The hem of his robe is dirty, and he hastily brushes the dust off.

Two other hooded figures drag out a third person with a bag over their head and wrists bound behind their back, kicking to be set free, but to no avail. One of the hooded figures forces the third person to their knees in front of Dream. The bag is ripped off and the person gasps as they look up at Dream.

He feels the wind around him go still for a moment. It's George.

"Dream," George says, gasping for air as he looks up at him from the ground.

There's a trickle of blood flowing from a gash on his forehead, and there's a bruise on the apex of one of his cheeks.

"Dream," George repeats, tears welling up in his eyes. "Dream, please. What's going on? I don't- Don't, I'm sorry, please."

Dream feels like a knife has been lodged into his gut, and like someone is twisting it slowly so he's forced to feel all of it. He looked around wildly, for a familiar face in the people standing around them, for some sort of direction from Tom.

Tom says nothing, just presses Dream's wand into his hand. George seems to understand what this implies.

"Dream," George says again, voice cracking. "Please. We were- we were friends! I didn't do anything, you know I haven't done anything-"

A boot comes down and kicks George in the temples. His eyes roll back for a moment and he slumps further down.

Dream is frozen in place.

"Go on," Tom says.

The circle takes a step backwards. Dream's lungs feel like the air has been punched out of them. He draws his wand, arm trembling as he brings it up. He meets George's eyes, still glittering with tears. He doesn't say anything, just slumps over, resigned.

Dream can't do anything. He's frozen in place, some other force more powerful than him controlling his movements.

"Step aside Dream," Tom says softly. "If you can't do it, I will."

"Dream," George calls again. "Don't kill me. Don't let him kill me, I didn't do anything. Please."

Dream doesn't move as Tom stands in front of him. He sees the arm, angular and garish, peak out behind the arm of his cloak, wand in hand. His nerves are on fire as he wills his body to do something, his mouth to say something.

He's fighting to move. He wants to yell and scream and tackle Tom to the floor, but his body is not his own right now. A flash of light, and George screams.

Dream wakes up shivering. The intensity of the nightmare has made him nauseous, and he throws himself to the floor as bile burns in his throat. He feels like someone has put their hands on his

brain and squeezed.

What the bloody hell was that?

Alphard stirs in his bed located across from Dream. He curses under his breath and hopes he hasn't woken him up.

"Lumos," Dream whispers, holding his wand up towards the clock on the wall across from him.

It's barely six in the morning. He's not getting any rest after that, he thinks. Might as well walk around and see what's happening.

When he goes down to the library, he wanders the Divination aisle as he thinks. Why would his mind come up with a vision as gruesome as that? As improbable as that?

Improbable in what nature? This is what you've signed up to do. Kill George, essentially. Kill a million Georges. The intrusive whisper in his mind asks him. He brushes it off.

His hands impulsively find themselves on a book about prophetic visions. He opens it up and flips through the table of contents absentmindedly, before he sees a heading of relevance to him.

ONEIROMANCY — EVOCATIVE DREAMS & THE SEEING EYE

There's no way, he tells himself, as he skims through for a section that may be relevant to him. He doesn't believe he had a vision, but reading through this might help soothe his concerns.

Prophetic visions through dreams can be had by any individual, whether they possess the eye of a seer or not. Often, these visions are projections of the future.

The purpose of prophecy, as discussed in CHAPTER EIGHT, is to provide a guideline as to a possible outcome, not to predict the footing of an individual towards their fate.

That provided no clarity at all.

"Didn't know you studied in the mornings."

Ah, think of the devil and he shall appear. Or in Dream's case, have a dream so vivid and disturbing that it leaves you feeling physically sick about the devil, and he'll magically find you in the library.

"Are you following me?" Dream asks with a grin as George appears from behind him and sits across from him.

"I just got out of practice, needed to grab a book for a Charms paper before class actually," George says.

"Bummer," Dream responds, pouting out a lip sarcastically.

George laughs, propping up his head on his hand, the other toying with a quill somebody had left there. Dream looks at him for a moment; highs of his cheeks unbruised, skin flushed a healthy pink.

He doesn't think for a moment, and one of his hands reaches out to touch George's. He's hesitant now, palm set on the desk but his index finger hovers over George's pinky. George looks up at him for a moment, before moving his hand closer to hold onto Dream's.

"You alright there?" George asks, cringing as his voice pitches up at the end of the question.

"Yeah," Dream says, running his thumb over George's knuckles.

George's stomach does a summersault as electricity shoots through his veins. Dream is holding his hand. In the library. Where anybody could walk in at any given time.

"Dream? Do you uh—" he starts, but when Dream's eyes meet his he loses his bravado.

"Nevermind," he rushes out.

"No, say it," Dream presses, smiling at him softly as he tilts his head to the side.

"I needed to get some quills," he says. "From Hogsmeade."

Dream raises an eyebrow as he continues running his thumb over George's knuckles.

He knows damn well what he's doing, George thinks to himself furiously.

"I was wondering if you would like to come with me, if you were free," George manages to breathe out. "If not, I understand. If you don't want your friends to see."

"Why would I care if my friends were to see?" Dream asks.

"Oh, I just assumed, I don't know- I didn't really—" George sputters out, but luckily for him Dream cuts him off with a laugh.

George would contain himself more, he really would, but he's finding it increasingly difficult to do so the more and more he gets to *know* Dream. He hasn't met anyone like him. The Ravenclaw kids were one track minded, and while it helped him hone in on his academic focus, he felt creatively trapped sometimes. He didn't have too many muggle friends, and his interactions with other houses outside of the prefects were limited.

Dream was different, in the sense that he didn't care about the expectations placed on him by everyone else. He's ambitious in a way that's different, resourceful about things that he cares about. Selective in what he gives his time to.

Whether or not George's ego basks in the glory of being allocated time for, by somebody who was so selective to what he gave his time to, is unimportant information. And whether the fact Dream is the kind of handsome they put on print magazines; blonde and golden eyed, lean and tall and everything George didn't know he was into, is also irrelevant.

"I suppose we'll go after lunch next weekend, if that's alright?" Dream breaks him out of his thoughts.

George nods, smiling at him. Dream smiles back.

"What're you reading?" he asks, and Dream props up the book to display the cover.

“Divination? Didn’t know you bought into that,” George says, leaning back into his chair.

“Bought into?” Dream prompts.

“It doesn’t- it isn’t exact enough. No guarantees, too many things aren’t stated explicitly enough. It’s not real magic,” George continues.

Dream scoffs.

“What makes you qualified to decide what is considered real magic or not, George?” Dream asks.

“Oh come on, you don’t seriously believe that there’s any truth to this? It’s just a few cases where people have somehow guessed right. Too many tea leaves and not enough concrete proof,” George continues.

Dream looks disappointed in him.

“I don’t expect you to understand the complexities of magic, seeing as you’re a muggle-born, but I assure you the field has much more to offer than your brain can comprehend,” Dream says coldly.

Silence as the two of them take in what the other is saying. George thinks that he understands the discrepancies in all magic in his limited time here at Hogwarts, above some of the greatest witches and wizards of all time, Dream thinks.

Dream just called him stupid with fancier words, George thinks.

“What’s that supposed to mean?” George asks, eyebrows furrowing in anger.

“It means, George, that you don’t know what you’re talking about,” Dream snarls, finally losing his temper. “Don’t sit here and act superior to me - just because you passed a few written exams doesn’t mean you’re some all knowing wizard. You’ve only been here for six years.”

“Well then, maybe don’t be so condescending,” George says back offendedly, pulling his hand from Dream’s.

“I was not being condescending, you were the one who waltzed in and started talking about things you don’t know about-”

“I’m allowed to have an opinion, seeing as I did actually pass the subject,” George spits back.

It’s a cheap shot, Dream’s eyes widen for a moment before he regains some control over himself. George immediately wishes he could take it back, but instead, he gets up and spins on his heel and walks away, still angry.

He should have listened to Davies. Dream was a pureblooded git who probably brought into all that exclusionary propaganda at the very least subconsciously.

For god’s sake, he hangs out with the Malfoys and Blacks. He assumed for some reason that Riddle’s friendship with them would have perhaps created some sort of intelligent dialogue and self reflection.

It isn’t even like George is the first person to assume Divination is a scam. A lot of people did! Dream wasn’t even taking it as a subject, so George doesn’t understand why he’s so worked up about it.

It doesn’t matter.

On the other hand though, maybe Dream was right, he thinks to himself as he grabs some grapes from the breakfast table. Perhaps there was something about Divination Dream understands that he doesn't.

He's probably messed this whole thing up, hasn't he?

He feels sad as he slips into a chair alongside some of his teammates. He sees Dream enters the dining hall a while later, and tries to catch his eye.

Dream doesn't as much as look in his direction.

Chapter End Notes

double update as a little sorry from me to u all for being lethargic with updating this last week.

hope everyone is good and hope this update was good and i would love to know what everyone thinks in the comments

thank you all so much for reading and i'll see you all in the next one!! :)

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

He doesn't plan to go see George for the next week. George doesn't try to approach him, but looks at him sadly whenever they're in the same room. Dream hates it because it makes him feel bad.

He's sitting with Tom, trying to work out some potions homework, but his mind wanders.

"Dream," Tom tells him, snapping him out of his thoughts. "The answer."

"Oh, uh, gillyweed?" Dream tries.

"What was the question?" Tom asks him.

Dream sighs. "Sorry Tom, I'm just a little unwell today, can we stop for now? I really appreciate your help."

Tom looks at him for a moment. "Of course. You've been working hard lately," he comments.

"I've been trying," Dream admits.

"Not just with school, with our things. You found the location of the house I wanted faster than some of those idiots even figured out how to spell the street name," Tom snorts.

"Just familiar with some of the older wizarding names, mother and father had me memorize them when I was younger," Dream shrugs, but his heart feels light at the recognition.

"Take today's meeting off," Tom offers. "Get your head screwed on back straight."

"Ok wow, that's really nice of you Tom, are you sure?" Dream asks hesitantly.

"I know you get squirmish during some of the...less pleasant meetings, where good news is not as abundant," Tom says.

Dream feels a cross between fear and gratitude in his chest. It means that someone was going to get punished.

"Thank you," he says, and Tom pats him on the back as he leaves.

He needs to find George. Weren't they going to go to Hogsmeade today? He supposes they made that plan before they fought, but still. It was the perfect day to go, actually, because all of his friends would be with Tom, and nobody would be at risk.

He wonders if he should apologize.

Well, no. George was being ignorant, that's not his fault. But still, maybe he shouldn't have blown up at him. It isn't George's fault he was born into a muggleborn family and wasn't allowed to be taught the importance of different magical fields. Maybe Dream could even explain it to him.

He looks in the library, but George isn't there. Perhaps he's in the Great Hall, getting lunch. He's right outside the door, too occupied in his own thoughts to notice when he bumps into someone.

“Oh, sorry!” The girl he’s bumped into says, bending over to help Dream pick up his books.

“No worries,” Dream responds, taking the books from her. He notices she is wearing Ravenclaw robes.

“Hey, a bit of a random question, but do you know who George is? About this tall-” he lines his hand up horizontally with his shoulders. “-seeker for your quidditch team?”

“I’ve heard of him,” the girl says. “Some people are practicing on the pitch right now, maybe he’s there.”

“Thank you!” He tells her, opening the door to the Great Hall for her.

She smiles before walking off.

When he makes his way to the pitch, he sees two people in blue robes, and rushes towards them. He’s lucky today, because one of them is George.

“George,” he says.

George turns to look at him, confused. He looks to his side to his Ravenclaw friend who also looks confused to see Dream here, before he looks at Dream again.

“Hi Dream,” he says finally.

“Weren’t we going to go to Hogsmeade today?” he asks.

“Oh,” George says, blinking slowly like he doesn’t quite believe Dream is there. “I- yeah, sorry, I just assumed we weren’t going anymore, but, yeah. I just got here, I can change really quickly-”

“I don’t mean to intrude!” Dream blurts out. “If you have plans, you can- I can go and-”

“No! No,” George almost shouts. “No, it’s fine, really. We just got here, I’ll only be a minute, didn’t really want to play today anyways. And I really need those quills.”

“Okay,” Dream says, smiling at him.

He turns to look at George’s friend, and offers him a hand to shake.

“I’m Dream, you are?”

“Davies,” his friend says. “Everyone calls me Davies. Nice to meet you, Dream.”

George looks over at Davies, a hint of a triumphant smile tugging at his lips, before he takes off the blue tunic and sits down to remove the Quidditch shoes.

He’s left in all black athletic pants and a tightly fitted black turtleneck. As they walk away from the castle and load onto a carriage, Dream opens his mouth to say something but George beats him to it.

“I’m sorry for saying those things to you,” George says, clutching his satchel closer to his chest. “You’re right, I shouldn’t make assumptions about things I don’t understand.”

It makes Dream’s heart feel heavy. To be fair, he wants to say, he’s made assumptions about George too. Assumptions that George didn’t take magic seriously, that he was mocking him. Assumptions that George fell into the category of most muggle-borns.

"People are nasty sometimes," George continues. "Some of the Slytherins, I've just had bad experiences before. They've attacked first and second year muggle-borns, called them some mean names. I've had to break up some attacks, and then you know what happened in fifth year. I had to hurt you before you could hurt me."

George whispers the last part, and it sends a shiver down Dream's spine.

Myrtle, a girl in Ravenclaw, had been found dead in one of the girl's toilets in the middle of their fifth year. George probably knew her, he realizes, since he was a prefect that year. He probably had to deal with all of the emotional aftermath.

"You think I'd hurt you?" Dream asks, his heart squeezing painfully, his mind already replaying the part of his nightmare where George had *begged* Dream to save him, and Dream couldn't.

His stomach lurches forward as the carriage comes to a halt.

"No, not you, just, y'know, people say things. Pureblooded Slytherins don't typically like muggle-born students. I know you're not like that though," George tells him with a laugh. "Bit of a stupid thought. If you were, I mean, you wouldn't be here with me."

Dream is like that.

"I'm sorry too," he says. "For making you feel that way. You're my friend George. I don't want you to feel unsafe to voice your opinion with me."

"Maybe you could teach me?" George asks as they walk down the street of Hogsmeade.

As they walk, Dream does. He explains that yes, while a lot of Divination ended up wrong, a lot of it was due to the fact it was interpreted wrong. He explains how results are consistent, but human error limits them.

"Magic isn't wrong," he insists. "It's never wrong. The *magician* however, can be wrong."

George drinks up every word he says, stopping him to ask questions in between, listens to Dream tell stories that go in circles with a smile on his face.

They find themselves at the quill store and George spends a lot of time inspecting the quality of the feather. Dream watches him go cross eyed as he tries to see how sharp the tip of one of them is.

There's a few books in the back, so he wanders over there when George starts consulting a shop owner on feather quality. There's a few different classic titles, and a few different obscure ones.

Hogwarts: A History, Peverell's Classics, Helga Hufflepuff: An Autobiography, The Pureblood Rhetoric.

The last one catches his eye. He looks at it; a dull black cover with golden lettering, no pictures or author or summary. Something about it draws him in. He glances at George, who's still preoccupied with the shopkeeper, and sneaks the book to the register.

He puts a galleon and two sickles on the counter, and the witch manning the cash register hands him four knuts as change.

"It's a good one," she tells him. "Changed my outlook."

"Did it?" Dream asks her. "What's it about?"

"There are lies that they don't teach us, especially pureblooded and half blooded wizards. The history is written in blood," she tells him.

Dream feels a chill run down his spine. He tucks the book into his bag, and goes to meet George who's finally narrowed it down to two quills.

"Well then? Has a quill chosen you yet, George?" Dream asks teasingly.

"It's difficult," George tells him. "Here, help me. Hold out your hands and close your eyes."

Dream does without complaint, and George runs one feather down each hand at the same time.

"Which one spoke to you more?"

Dream laughs as he opens his eyes, and George rushes to put both feathers behind his back.

"Don't laugh, just tell me!"

"Let me see them again," Dream says, reaching behind George's back, but George shakes his head no.

"It isn't about how they look, it's about how they feel!" he protests.

"Fine," Dream says, deciding to entertain him as he closes his eyes for the second time. "Do it again."

George runs the feathers down his palm softer this time.

"Right hand," Dream says.

"I was hoping you'd say that one," George says with a grin.

"Why didn't you just choose it yourself, you idiot?" Dream asks him.

George doesn't answer, just walks up to the register and they ring him up.

They decide to swing by Honeydukes while they're there. George holds the door open, and Dream ducks in order to not hit his head on the doorframe. They've redecorated for the season: metallic highlights and dark walls. Golden streamers caught the light of the sun above them, leaving little yellow refractions on all the different displays. Dream watches as George stares at the floating candies to the right of them with fascination.

"I don't go to sweet shops that often," he admits to Dream. "My mother thinks- she's not too fond of worldly pleasures."

Dream nods, remembering George has told him that his family was religious. He's not too well versed on the topic, so he reminds himself to look it up later.

Dream walks George through the different flavours of fizzing lollies. His heart swells with something he has never felt for anyone before as he watches George stare in amazement at the enchanted ceiling.

Tom Marvolo Riddle sits at his desk as his soldiers stand before him.

"I asked you all," he starts softly, "to find one address. And yet, none of you possessed the knowledge or the wisdom to figure out anything of use."

"Sir," Alphard starts, already uneasy at the idea of interrupting Tom when he's in one of his moods.

"What is it?" Tom asks back, sharply.

"Dream isn't here, sir," Alphard says nervously.

"I'm aware, I gave him the day off," Tom responds.

"He's been hanging around that Ravenclaw kid a lot," someone else chimes in. "The seeker, George."

"I can't quite comprehend," Tom continues, "why so many of you are concerned with what he is doing. He's already told me."

The room falls silent again.

"I don't enjoy punishing you all. It brings me no pleasure when magical blood is in pain," Tom mournfully proclaims. "But incompetency is not tolerated here. I don't feel like dishing anything out today - Headmaster Dippet's been on my back about Winter Ball preparations, and I'm exhausted to be frank with you all."

The air is thick with tension, as everyone waits for what will happen next.

"Nott," Tom finally calls. "Come here."

Cantankerous Nott steps forward nervously.

"I have a task for you," Tom starts. "I need you to start working on a directory of all the pure blooded wizards at Hogwarts. Find their parents names, find their names, and if they wed after Hogwarts, track their children's names. This is your duty going forward."

Nott nods, swallowing thickly.

"If I find," Tom continues, "that the girl you've been seeing, is not on this list, there may be some problems."

"I- She is pure blood, my lord. Her last name is Bell, she's from-"

"Enough," Tom says, holding up a hand. "Put it in the directory. If she is of magical descent, then there will be nothing to be concerned about."

Nott nods again, as he steps back into his place in the circle.

"Malfoy, stay behind. Everyone else, go."

The boys file out of the room, pale faced and solemn. Malfoy adjusts himself so he's standing in front of Tom, and bows his head.

“My lord,” Malfoy says, the words unconfident.

“Abraxas, I need you to tell me everything you know about that Ravenclaw Prefect.”

Abraxas Malfoy looks confused for a moment, and then turns delighted.

“He’s the seeker for the Ravenclaw Quidditch Team, I believe this is his third year. He’s good too - moves fast.”

Tom nods, urging for Abraxas to go on.

“He’s also, well, this hasn’t been confirmed, but it’s rumoured,” Abraxas says sheepishly. “But word on the block, according to Emeric, he’s also a bit, y’know...”

Tom pointedly stares at him.

“He’s a queer, supposedly,” Abraxas says. “One of the Ravenclaw boys that left Hogwarts a year ago suspected as much, supposedly managed to get with him. But he was also a bit of a gossip, so not sure. All just internal speculations, probably untrue.”

“Is he involved in any muggle support clubs? Any activism?” Tom presses.

Abraxas shakes his head no.

“Very well, that will be all,” Tom says, shaking his hand dismissively.

George is not a concern to him in the slightest, but the reaction everyone has to Dream and him has given Tom a cause for concern. Dream was by far, the most dedicated to his cause. If he were forced to reveal his identity as the individual responsible for the mudblood attacks to anyone, to come clean to anyone as the true heir of Slytherin, it would be him.

Dream speaks with fervour, has the passion to potentially command crowds one day. Tom will be sure to reward him greatly for the new recruits he is bound to bring in.

Still, there is a test of loyalty he must pass first.

Chapter End Notes

three consecutive updates who am i???

hope everyone has had a good day, and i'd love to know what everyone thinks in the comments :)

Chapter 7

He'd heard of the pureblood rhetoric before. It was what magic folk who believed in equality called Dream and his family's beliefs. Surely, taking a look at the situation through the lens of someone different was good for him. It would allow him to debunk people that believed the wrong thing more efficiently. Maybe it would even change his mind on a few things. Well rounded reading lists create great minds, he tells himself before he starts reading, in case anyone walks in on him with this and he has to explain himself.

The pureblood agenda promotes the idea that by allowing witches and wizards to interact with muggles, magical blood is diluted as a result.

This narrative has been carefully crafted by old wizarding families for power and control. The rewriting of history, instilling the belief in their children that every varying version of history that comes from people other than them is wrong. This has been done deliberately, in order to indoctrinate their children into the same beliefs as them.

We cover and debunk the inaccuracies in the proclamations that wizards have ever been an oppressed group. For our own safety, we will not attach our names to this novel, for fear of being targeted by pureblood supremacist groups.

Our hope is that this finds itself in the hands of people who grew up being taught this untrue rhetoric, and at least encourage them to open their minds to the truth of how diversity is what makes magic great.

Magic in pureblood societies is very much taught as something that must be guarded. We argue that it instead serves the greater purpose of being shared.

-

"What's all this?" George asks as he walks into the room of requirement.

Dream is sitting on a love seat, Patches on his shoulder as he inspects his wand. In front of him is a mahogany table holding an assortment of sweets.

Today there is a fireplace alive at the center of the room, with bronze and blue banners hanging from the ceiling.

"A congratulations," Dream says, finally looking up at him and smiling. "For winning your game. I feel as though I should be more disappointed, seeing you did beat my house, but..."

George walks over to him as he trails off, reaching out to scratch Patches' head.

"Great, hello to you too," Dream huffs.

George scoffs, but lifts his free hand and places it on Dream's head, gently ruffling his hair. It is

casually affectionate, but Dream feels like it is the first time he has ever been felt. The touch is so soft, so intimate and transient that Dream sees stars. Dream's brain short circuits for a moment before he shakes it off.

"Continue what you were saying," George says, as he takes a seat next to him.

Dream desperately tries to find his train of thought again, but fails. Patches stands up and starts to knead his shoulder.

"She's giving you a massage," George notes.

"She learned that from yours, y'know," Dream grumbles. "Sitting on my shoulder like an owl."

"It's cute," George insists. "Makes you look like a pirate."

Dream vaguely has an idea of what that is, but asks about it anyways so he can hear George explain it to him.

"I need to ask you something," Dream tells him as they indulge themselves in treacle tarts. "You don't have to answer, but I hope that you trust me enough to talk about it if you need to."

George watches him as he takes a bite and nods, leaning back as he waits for Dream to continue. Dream thinks of what his parents might do if they knew he was here, spending the later hours of every evening he could find locked away in a secret room with a boy who came from a muggle background. He wonders what it is exactly about George that makes him want to toss every principle he's abided by his entire life out the window.

"The night I walked in on you, the first night we talked, what were the wounds on your back?"

George swallows as he wipes his hands on a napkin nervously.

"You don't have to tell me," Dream rushes out. "I was just wondering if you were okay."

"No, I can tell you now, it's alright," George mutters. "I trust you."

The words weigh heavy on Dream's heart.

"I haven't told anyone this before," George admits. "I don't need you to feel bad for me, you just can't tell anyone."

Dream gives him his word. Patches hops off his shoulder and onto the table as he shifts in his seat.

"Are you familiar with Christianity?" George asks him.

"Vaguely."

"There's a religion - oh, you don't know what that is either, I think"

"I know," Dream butts in, smiling proudly. "I asked the muggle studies professor after you talked about it."

George smiles back at him, softly before continuing. "A lot of people use it as an excuse to be violent and intolerant."

Dream nods. *The way he's going to be after he leaves Hogwarts.* He shoves the thought away. It isn't the same.

"My family is extremely religious, and they believe that I've been possessed by the devil," George says quietly. "I thought I was too, for a while. It started when I was left handed - they hated it, tried to condition me to be right handed instead, but it just never worked. They just didn't let me write in public though, pulled me out of school and started homeschooling, so it was an easy fix."

Dream slowly nods again, taking in this information.

"The second thing was the wizardry. I mean, it's kind of funny actually," George laughs bitterly. "When I was a kid and I could move stuff around a little with just my hands, make things appear sometimes, my family thought I was some sort of godsend. A miracle worker."

George leans forward, the flames of the fireplace casting shadows across his skin. Dream keeps his eyes on the dark space beneath George's cheekbones.

"The second I got accepted into this school, the second they saw the word witchcraft on that piece of paper, they changed their mind about everything."

George looks down at his lap, where he flexes and relaxes his fingers.

"They don't even know I'm here. They think I attend a Christian Boys School," George says resentfully. "Professor Dumbledore, actually, was the one that came to collect me personally. He told them I was invited to repent, or whatever, and brought me here instead. They keep all my stuff here over the summer so I'm not found."

Dream reaches out for him, takes George's clenched fist in his hand. He peels his fingers away from his palms, wincing when he notices they've left behind crescent shaped markings. He runs his thumb over them softly a few times, muttering a healing spell under his breath.

George breaks down into tears at the gesture.

"Did I hurt you?" Dream asks concernedly, immediately dropping George's hand and instead going in to catch the tears from George's eyes.

George shakes his head no.

"I'm not done telling you," George goes on, his voice shaking. "This is the hardest part to tell you, and I'm scared it will make you hate me."

"I could never hate you," Dream says without hesitation, resting his hand on George's cheek. "I could never, George."

"You did though, you did when we first met," George says, placing a hand on his wrist. "And it's not your fault, it's okay-"

"It's not," Dream says firmly. "I never did apologize for that."

"Dream, you don't have to," George starts, but Dream cuts him off again.

"I held some beliefs at the beginning of the year George, that I'm not so sure of anymore," Dream says before he can lose his courage. "I'm trying to learn, but it's taking time. I can't tell you more than that, I'm sorry, but please trust me."

Dream knows he's being purposefully vague, knows that if George knew the truth he would up and bolt away. But he's being selfish with George, but he can't help himself.

George nods, not even a little bit of distrust in his eyes, and it makes Dream's heart scream in agony. He continues speaking, and Dream dreads what comes next in this part of the story.

"Last summer, near the end, my parents caught me with someone," George breathed out.

He pulls Dream closer all of a sudden so his head is on George's chest. He can hear his heart beating erratically.

"I could never hate you," Dream reminds him, wrapping his arms around George's waist.

"I know," George chokes out. "But just in case."

They sit in silence for another moment. Dream has never felt so kindly towards another person in his life. If there was a spell he could cast or a potion he could drink to feel all of George's agony in this moment a hundred times over if it even provided George an ounce of relief, he would. He curses himself for ever making George feel scared to speak to him.

"I'm being selfish with you right now," George admits. "But I can't not be selfish with you."

Dream can't take it, can't take the intensity of whatever it is he feels right now, so he buries his face in the crook underneath George's arm.

"They found me with a boy," George finally says, and Dream's heart stops beating.

"I was with another boy, holding hands in the barn, we weren't even- I didn't do anything, but my parents thought it was—"

George takes a deep breath, and Dream tightens his grip on his waist.

"My parents had always suspected, but this was confirmation, that I was queer," George breathes out the last word, shifting himself across the couch and away from Dream. Startled, Dream looks up at George, eyes screwed shut as he holds up his wand with a shaking arm.

"George," Dream whispers, reaching out to guide George's arm down, but George drops his wand the second Dream's hands find him. His shoulders hunch over as he makes himself small.

"I can't," George whispers as he opens his eyes. "The insane part of this is that even if you tried, even if you wanted to hurt me right now, I wouldn't do anything back to you. I can't."

"I don't care," Dream says hoarsely, as something gets stuck in his throat. "I don't care, if you're queer. I wouldn't- George, you could've told me you killed someone, and I don't think even then I'd tell anyone if you told me not to."

"Don't say that," George says, as Dream pulls him closer and takes his place back in George's arms.

"I will," Dream says. "I'll say it until you believe me."

They sit there for a bit, drowning in the intensity of what they've said. Dream clings to George like he's the one who's told him his every secret, like he's afraid George will be angry with him. George's hands find their way into Dream's hair again.

"The scars are from a ritual," George finally says.

Dream puts his ear to George's chest.

“They cut a cross on my back,” George continues. “I don’t even know how I got out of there, I just closed my eyes and willed myself literally anywhere else. I got to Dumbledore, somehow, and he patched me up a little and sent me off to Davies’. I told him I came to practice quidditch, which he was ecstatic about. He doesn’t know though.”

Dream feels something burn in his chest. The idea of anyone doing anything to George, who gets excited about flying candy and is so patient when Dream can’t comprehend elementary potions makes him see red.

“It couldn’t be healed through a spell, Dumbledore said it was too risky and could lead to raised scarring,” George goes on to say. “But it’s all fixed now.”

Dream pulls George closer so George’s head is on his chest instead. His soul hurts, screams out for something to undo everything that George has been through.

“I won’t have to see them after I leave Hogwarts,” George continues. “I don’t know where I’ll go. I thought I’d try my hand at being a Herbology professor here, I really enjoy it.”

“You could go anywhere,” Dream says. “Do anything. You’re ridiculously smart.”

“I wanted to get married,” George says abruptly. “I’ve wanted that forever, but I can’t even do it with someone I love.”

“Why can’t you?” Dream inquires. “There’s got to be one place on earth where you can.”

“There isn’t a single one, Dream,” George says sadly.

Dream would split nations and rewrite constitutions if it meant George could be happy.

“Can I see your back? I may be able to do something about it if the skin there is discoloured,” Dream asks gently.

George wordlessly gets off of him and takes off his robe, before rolling up the back of his shirt to show Dream the state of the scar.

“Can I touch?” Dream asks gently, and the back of George’s head nods.

Dream runs his thumb over the corner of the very bottom of the “t” over and over, until he finally notices that the colour has begun to fade back into the ivory of George’s back.

“It’s fading,” Dream states. “But it might take me a while.”

“Take as long as you like,” George says, as Dream pulls the two of them back onto the couch, laughing before he speaks again. “I have forever.”

Dream drags his thumb up higher as he tries to cover more area. He could touch George until the sun blinked out of existence, innocent hands exploring the expanse of skin across his back, he thinks, and it still wouldn’t be enough time.

Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George was exhausted. He'd gotten up early for quidditch practice and the Bludgers had been feeling particularly uncooperative today, the charms test was harder than he anticipated and he had just finished the prefects meeting which had taken much longer than he had originally thought. He hadn't had a chance to eat all day, the last thing he wants to deal with right now is Malfoy and Black's mean streak against the first year Gryffindors.

"What do the two of you think you're doing?" George calls out, rushing over as fast as he can.

When the both of them spot him they attempt to bolt, but George is quicker. He pulls his wand out from his robe pocket and loudly casts the summoning charm. Both Malfoy and Black fall over, face first, and drag across the floor to stop at George's feet.

"I'll ask you again," George says, stepping back and tilting his head to watch the both of them pull themselves to their feet. "What were you doing?"

When neither Malfoy nor Black say anything, George turns to the two first year girls standing together. The taller one doesn't make eye contact with him and opts to stare at her shoes instead, while the shorter one looks angry.

"What were they doing?" George asks them.

"He called her something nasty," the shorter one says, tugging at her friend's sleeve, blue eyes glowering with anger. "So I told him to stick his wand up his own arse."

George stifles a laugh before doing his best to remain serious. "Did he take your advice?"

"Sure hope he does," she says. "You can dock all the points you like, I don't care."

"I'm not docking points for self defence," George scoffs as he turns his gaze towards the taller of the two. "What did they call you?"

"He called me a mudblood," she says, clenching her jaw.

George sees red.

"This isn't your first offence," he says to Malfoy, who rolls his eyes in response.

He can't believe these two. He'd presume that discriminatory attitudes, especially coming from two pureblood families that vehemently denied having supremacist attitudes, would at the very least be subtle. Everything had cooled down in their sixth year, after Myrtle died, the guilt preventing the regular bullies from going on their hate campaigns. This year they seem to have multiplied, even a few individuals had come forward sporting old fashioned attitudes in George's house.

"Don't you have any shame?" he asks them again.

Again, no response. He takes the names of the two first years and apologizes on their behalf, says he'll sort it out and keep them updated. When they leave, he sees Malfoy and Black trying to

escape once again.

George sighs.

“Don’t you learn?” George calls out, summoning them again with the same charm as they’re brought to this feet for the second time.

“Just send us to Riddle, he’ll sort us out,” Black finally says, staring at George, unimpressed.

“I don’t think so,” George says coldly. “I’m bringing this to Headmaster Dippet.”

Malfoy laughs at him.

“They gave him a little badge, Alphard, and now he’s on such a power trip, thinks he’s the minister of magic,” Malfoy says, sneering at George as he says it.

“Only took me four years of magic to earn this little badge, Malfoy, you’ve had your entire life. What’s your excuse for not having it?” George bites back, rolling up the sleeves of his dress shirt.

Malfoy doesn’t take too kindly to this, and draws his wand as both he and Black get on their feet again.

“Stupefy!” he shouts, catching George slightly off guard, but he’s able to dodge it just in time.

He points his wand towards Malfoy, but flicks his wrist towards Black, who’s still scrambling for his wand at the last second.

“Expelliarmus,” he calls, watching as the wand flies across the corridor and hits the wall.

“Accio,” he casts, summoning the wand and tucking it into his pocket.

“You’re quick,” Malfoy laughs, starting to circle George.

“You don’t want to duel me,” George warns. “You’re putting yourself in more trouble than you need to be.”

“You scared?” Malfoy jeers, casting a stinging hex, which George deflects with ease.

“Nah, I’m alright,” George says back, tone even, rolling his shoulders as he points his wand at Black again, who has started to charge at him. “Colloshoo.”

Alphard Black lunges at George, but falls flat on his face with a sickening crunch as his shoes get stuck to the floor.

“You’ve got two options,” George states, eyes flickering to where Black lays, unimpressed.

“Yeah?” Malfoy asks, casting Stupefy which George flicks aside without as much as flinching.

“You can bring your friend to the hospital wing,” George continued, wand now pointed directly between Malfoy’s eyes. “Or I’ll *send* you both there myself.”

The threat hangs in the air for a moment before Malfoy laughs.

“Petrificus Totalus,” Malfoy shouts.

George ducks, the curse flying over his head and hitting the wall instead, dissipating into blue and

silver sparks.

“Flipendo,” George says softly, drawing his wand backwards as he casts it.

The spell travels fast, and Malfoy is sent stumbling back as it hits him in the chest.

“What’s going on here?”

George turns to see Tom Riddle walking towards the two of them.

“I’m sure the two of them can explain,” George remarks, glaring down at them on the floor.

Tom stares down at Malfoy and Black, who seem to have lost their nerve.

“The two of you were so eager to have Tom sort you out, I’m sure he’ll be more than happy to now,” George says condescendingly.

He turns to Tom and hands him Alphard’s wand.

“I’m going to get dinner now, and I would prefer not to be attacked. I don’t enjoy humiliating people particularly, but I can make an exception,” George declares, his voice low and dangerous. He turns around and starts walking towards the Great Hall, not bothering to look back.

“I’ll deal with you two after dinner,” Tom says through gritted teeth as both Malfoy and Black stumble to their feet.

“He didn’t-” Malfoy starts, but Riddle presses the tip of his wand right underneath where his Adam’s apple sits.

“Go to the infirmary, and if they ask why, you’re going to tell them the truth,” Tom says calmly.

Malfoy swallows, forcing the tip of Tom’s wand deeper into his neck.

“We might- we might get in trouble,” Malfoy starts.

“You should have considered that before you started problems with Ravenclaw’s *darling*,” Tom drawls out darkly. “I’m not going to risk my neck trying to lie for you.”

When Tom enters Alphard’s dorm room, he sees Dream passed out at his desk, head on the cover of a book.

“Renervate,” Tom mutters, pointing his wand at Dream’s head, forcing him awake.

Dream jolts up and looks around wildly, looking startled to see Tom.

“What’re you reading?” Tom asks, walking around to look at Dream’s book.

Dream’s blood runs cold as Tom’s eyes scan over the title.

“The pureblood rhetoric,” Tom says out loud, eyes narrowing as he takes it into his hands.

This is it, Dream thinks. This is where Tom figures out Dream is having second thoughts about this whole purification of the wizarding race thing. He doesn’t think the outcomes would bode particularly well for him.

Hey Tom, turns out the majority of the things I was taught as a child are factually incorrect! As a

result, I am unsure if I hold the same beliefs in the same intensity, as exposure to this new material has caused me to have polarized views to the ones you think I hold. Now, I know you said there are consequences, but I was wondering if you could let me off-

“This is interesting reading Dream, I’m very impressed you’re taking the time to do this research,” Tom says, putting a hand on his shoulder.

Dream almost flinches at how cold and tight his fingers feel on his shoulder, but decides against it. Tom tolerates Dream’s vulnerability, but he will not tolerate Dream’s cowardice.

Dream glances at the pages, and tries to hide his shock at what the pages now say.

Blood purity, the theory written by Rosalinda Rottenbourg, proves that households with two pureblooded parents can raise stronger, healthier wizard children that will be able to uphold the dignity of magic. Muggle rights activist groups have tried to debunk this theory, but it can easily be observed as true through the comparison of the skill of a pure or half-blood to a mudblood.

“Yeah,” Dream manages to say.

Tom removes his hand from Dream’s shoulder and places the book back on Dream’s desk, as Dream stares at it in wonder.

“Malfoy and Black picked another fight today,” Riddle says as he sits himself on Dream’s bed.

“Did they?” Dream asks, only half paying attention as his mind furiously tries to come up with an answer as to why the pages read different words now.

“They did. They lost, embarrassingly. To your friend actually, George,” Tom says.

Dream is paying attention now.

“What happened?” He asks.

Tom shrugs. “I’ll find out tomorrow when I follow up with Headmaster Dippet. George already finished them off by the time I got there.”

Dream shouldn’t but he feels pride in his chest on behalf of George, of being able to fend off two wizards at once. Malfoy and Black, despite being knuckleheads at times, were actually quite intelligent.

“What a pity,” Tom sighs. “George will have to be dealt with very early on if we plan on succeeding. I’ve duelled him before, we ended in a draw. He’s quick.”

“George?” Dream says, alarmed.

George, slumped over, bleeding and shivering and screaming, eyes screwed shut as he waits for the curse to take him. George, crying as a cross is carved into his back, the image of it so painful that Dream feels bile burning his throat at just the idea of it, George, scared Dream will hate him, displaying a vulnerability that Dream doesn’t see in the daylight hours. George, who has been hurt so badly, dealt such a laughable set of cards by life, and still coming out on top as faster, better, stronger, than anyone Dream knows.

“Yes,” Tom repeats.

“I don’t think you should,” Dream abruptly says before he can stop himself. “He’s considering returning to muggle life after Hogwarts. His family lives on a farm. It’s unnecessary attention.”

“You can say you care for him,” Tom laughs, but it lacks warmth and understanding. “If he’s special to you, we can make an exception and you can keep him around.”

Dream knows there is no way George will sit back and let that happen, let himself become a lapdog to Dream as Dream goes out and prosecutes muggles.

“I thought we were just getting rid of the bad ones,” Dream tries, but his voice lacks conviction.

“They’re *all* bad ones,” Tom says, finality in his tone. “But if he won’t be a fuss, and doesn’t mind being mentally searched every so often, so we’re sure he’s not a spy, you can keep him.”

This is sick.

Dream knows, this is sick. There is no way he can even ask George to do that, no way he can ask anyone to do that. How many other Georges even exist? Muggle-borns who get excited about magic, who come in eager and willing to contribute to society? How many other innocent muggle-borns does Tom plan on killing?

Dream is over his head. Regret pools in his stomach, rises up around his lungs and drowns him.

“You’re thinking too much of it, it was just an attempt at humour,” Tom says, but Dream has never felt less entertained in his life.

Alphard barges into the room, angry and red in the face. A bandage sits on his nose and he shakes with anger as he points a meaty finger at Dream.

“You,” he hisses. “Make sure your little *boyfriend* doesn’t snitch, or there’ll be hell to pay.”

“You’re the one who picked the fight, take the loss like a man, *Alphard*, ” Dream spits back. “I would’ve never lost a duel to a *mudblood*. ”

It feels wrong as he’s saying it, but he knows he has to. He has to dig himself out of his own grave that he seemed so keen on building just a few minutes ago. He has to convince Tom that Dream has no weak spots, that there’s no reason for alarm, and then he has to figure out how to get out of this.

He has to get out of this.

He doesn’t know what he believes anymore, but Tom’s goals grow hungrier for blood with each passing moment, and Dream doesn’t believe a punishment as severe as death is appropriate. What is their crime?

Being born?

Alphard laughs at him.

“This is rich. This is *fucking* rich,” Alphard roars, tearing off his tie as he tosses it towards the hamper.

“It’s so funny you say that, because that’s exactly the word he got upset with me for using. You’re talking to me about being a *man* Dream? At least I own up to what I believe. Why don’t you come out and say what you actually are, huh? Hanging around *mudbloods*- ”

“Stop,” Dream fumed.

“-coming up with excuses, defending his honour, while you’re the same as me, as all of us. Own up to what you are, Dream. You’re either a *coward*, or you’re a *blood traitor*. Pick one.”

Dream stands up, fists clenched and ready to fight.

“Enough,” Tom says, drawing his wand.

Dream sits back down, tearing Alphard to shreds with his eyes as Alphard stares back at him coolly.

Oh, Dream, don’t worry about deciding. You’re both of those things, the voice in his head taunts him as the coils in his stomach tighten.

Chapter End Notes

tom riddle is canonically 6'4???? im losing my shit
this is so much fun to write holy shit this era (tom riddle era) is criminally underrated.
petition for more tom riddle era.
hope everyone enjoyed the chapter! i loved reading everyone's thoughts in the
comments for the last one u guys are so quick and smart and cool and i love hearing
what everyone thinks so if you have the time i'd love to know what you're thinking :)
<3 u guys see u in the next one!!

Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The crowds scream his name, blue banners dropping down from all of the spectator towers. His team has hoisted him up and he pumped his fist in the air as a show of victory, the first on pitch celebration he had allowed himself for the year.

“George!” Wilbur calls as George’s team finally lets go of him. “You madman! That was a genius move!”

Ravenclaw took the win against Gryffindor, and it had been a game of pure speed. George had found the snitch so quickly that there was barely any time for the chasers to actually do anything. That was the game plan, Davies had made sure to drill it into his head.

Their keeper is so good, George. Just catch the snitch and complete the game, that's all you need to do. Move fast. Their chasers are bigger than we are, we can't physically overpower them.

One of the Gryffindor beaters, Sapnap, had seen him diving down to catch the snitch and had hit a bludger at his head. Without thinking, George had thrown himself down so he hung from his broom with one hand, effectively dodging the bludger, and had brought his boot down on the snitch to the ground, taking the game.

Davies takes his arm in a bone crushing grip and hoists it in the air again, and the crowd screams louder.

“Good game,” Sapnap tells him as they shake hands at the very end, smiling. “I’ll make sure not to miss next time, though.”

The threat holds no real malice, too friendly to be taken seriously.

“I’ll be sure to make it hard for you,” George tells him, tightening his grip as he grins.

FOOTNOTES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Whenever this book comes in contact with an individual who is not open to removing the hatred in their hearts, who is aware of the insidious nature of race purification, the text will rearrange itself to read out a generic pureblood argument. This is to keep our readers, some who come from households that will punish them for exploring outside of the box, from coming in contact with danger.

George stares at the enchanted ceiling of the Ravenclaw common room. He's lying on the floor, exhaustion weighing particularly heavy today. The quiet late hours, basking in the incandescent blue lights of the lanterns that hang from the ceiling feel like the calm before the storm.

He doesn't mind when people call him names, because he doesn't particularly care what a handful of bigots say about him. The fatigue comes from being underestimated.

George isn't stupid. He knows that despite fighting for his place as one of the top students, despite his position as a prefect and the seeker of the quidditch team, despite his Herbology research and everything he pours into his work, he forever carries the weight of coming from a non-magical background.

He doubts it would matter as much if he was in Gryffindor or Hufflepuff, but Ravenclaw had begun to develop its own brand of sinister. With wisdom comes superiority, with superiority comes arrogance, and with arrogance comes division.

George could only do so much, be in so many places at a time to protect people that didn't have skin as thick as he did. He wishes the other prefects could step up and take some goddamned initiative.

The door to the common room creaks open, and George tilts his head to see who's come in.

"Davies said you'd be here," Dream's voice calls, as he sits down next to George.

George nods, and he feels Dream place a hand on his forehead.

Dream, who had captured his heart while remaining an enigma the entire time. George has shown Dream parts of him he didn't even like thinking about. Dream is gentle and patient with him, like he doesn't even know he could ruin George if he wanted to. George is so used to having to be grounded in every other space he enters, but he exists in a constant state of free fall around Dream, a state of mind reserved for when they are together.

It's the safest terror he's ever known.

"You feeling okay, George?" Dream asks.

George repositions Dream's hand so it rests on his cheek and closes his eyes, unable to find the energy to speak.

"I'm sorry for what Malfoy and Black did," he continues. "Heard you dealt with them just fine though."

"I'm sick of dealing with things," George says to the ceiling.

Silence. Dream shifts so he's lying down on the floor next to George, hands brushing over each other. Dream wants to take it, but he's afraid of what that means.

"I'm sorry," he finally says.

"You don't have to be sorry," George responds.

A beat. A million things Dream wants to confess right now.

"I wish I could make it better for you," he finally says.

"Tell me a secret," George tells him, turning his head to look at Dream.

His hair falls in front of his eyes, and Dream already has trouble saying no to George under normal conditions. Here he is, sprawled out underneath sapphire shadows, looking otherworldly. Dream can't possibly say no.

"Do people come up here during this hour?" Dream asks, and George shakes his head no as he shuffles closer.

They're lined up together, shoulder to shoulder, arms and fingers intertwining like it's instinct.

"I'm scared, George."

It's a confession and a prompt, everything and nothing at the same time. Dream wants George to hound him, press his arms above his head and a wand in his sternum as Dream weeps for forgiveness and George demands for a solid truth.

George doesn't care what Dream wants, apparently, because he's placing his head on Dream's chest, curling up around him like he can shield Dream from anything the world throws at them. Crocus flowers and carnations bloom inside Dream's lungs, guilt and gratitude.

Dream has never been good with words, but George makes it abysmally easier and impossible at the same time. He doesn't know what it is.

George's lips ghost over his neck and Dream wants to tilt his head up a little higher, just to see what George will do.

"I'm scared," Dream says again. "I did something bad."

George's hand over his heart.

Take it, he wants to say. They are so soft with each other, soft glances and soft touches and everything good he needs and doesn't deserve. He wants George to sink his claws into his chest, to make an example of Dream for falling into every trap he possibly could, and potentially endangering him.

But George doesn't, because George doesn't know.

"You could never," George says with conviction.

Dream had told him that night in the common room that he could've killed somebody and he wouldn't be mad. He thinks about that a lot, while he lies in bed, about if he feels the same. George thinks if Dream killed anybody, they'd have to deserve it.

It's sickening. When they cut the mark of God into George's back, they were certain that it would serve as a reminder to everything evil to stay away. George believes very strongly, that if anything resembling the devil existed, it had only entered him the second the blade met his skin. He'd never been so spiteful, so sure he was deserving of nothing good when he patched up his own wounds in the bathroom of an inn while his teacher waited outside. He thought he was damned; a life of lying and isolation, and then he had met Dream, and hating everything became a little bit harder and pretending to be happy became a little bit easier.

Here he is, clinging to Dream like his life depends on it. Dream's hands are on the skin of his back again, underneath his shirt, fingers tracing the scar. It's the most innocent touch he's ever had the pleasure of knowing.

"George," Dream says, mind growing heavy as the weight of the situation catches up to him.

He's signed his life away to hurt people. Dream has promised himself to a cause that serves no purpose but to uphold the pride of people who would find new things to argue about once everything was over.

Even if George hates him, rightfully so, Dream can't do that. Nobody should do that. Dream is ready to devote the rest of his life to guarding George from anyone who tries to hurt him on the basis of blood purity, on the basis of anything. Dream does this with every good thing that comes his way. He swaddles it with possessiveness, the only kind of love he's been taught is true.

"I'll fix this," Dream promises. "I'll fix this, and then I'll tell you, and you can choose to do whatever you want. You can leave and ask me to never contact you again, but I'll fix what I did, because it was wrong."

He's babbling, it makes no sense, and George nods along anyways.

"How'd you get in here?" George asks him, going to sit up.

Dream tugs him back down and wraps his arms around him loosely. When George doesn't make an effort to move and instead settles in, getting comfortable, Dream answers.

"There was a riddle," Dream says shortly. "The name of a room that possesses neither life or death."

"What was the answer?" George asks, tilting his head back to look at Dream.

"A mushroom," Dream tells him.

George laughs, corners of his eyes crinkling. "Because fungi aren't technically alive or dead. Clever."

"I thought you'd enjoy it," Dream says, burying his face in George's hair. "I wanna stay like this forever."

George shifts again, and Dream feels him exhale.

"I wouldn't mind," George says after a moment.

George wonders if anyone can feel anything short of on fire around Dream. He doesn't say it out loud.

-

Tom brings Dream out to the forbidden forest alone today. The cold November air bites at his fingers as he draws his cloak closer to his chest. Tom seems unbothered by all of it.

"You're going to help me test something," Tom tells him.

Dream doesn't want to.

"Yes, my lord," he says.

Tom pushes back against two branches, motioning for Dream to stay quiet. Dream watches in

anticipation, for some sickly creature - visions of giant snakes and spiders and rats crawl into his brain. Instead, Tom motions towards a unicorn, silvery and tall and beautiful.

Dream is breathless. He hasn't seen one of these since Care of Magical Creatures in fourth year.

No marking on the hooves, or tags, which means that it's undomesticated. Counterclockwise spiral on the horn spaced apart notably, which means that it's a relatively young female.

"Are you familiar with unicorns, Dream?" Tom asks him.

Dream nods, not wanting to scare her away by making noise.

"What do you know about them?" Tom presses.

"They're one of the purest creatures," Dream whispers. "Uh, they prefer to hang around women."

"Their blood has the ability to heal anyone of anything, even if that person is nearly dead, potentially serving as an elixir for immortality," Tom whispers into his ear.

Dream thinks about the implications of that statement.

No.

Tom cannot be asking what Dream thinks he's going to be asking. He feels around beneath his feet for a branch and steps on it loudly, in an attempt to warn the poor creature to run. The unicorn looks up at him and steps forward to bolt, but is unsuccessful. A pit sets into Dream's stomach when he realizes that she's been tied to a tree.

"Go on, Dream," Tom tells him softly. "Go pet it."

Dream takes a deep breath stepping forward towards the creature. She doesn't as much as flinch when his hand finds its way to her muzzle, just stares at him with slate coloured eyes.

"Hello," he whispers, closing his eyes and resting his forehead against hers. "I'm sorry, I'm so so sorry. I'll protect you, I'll try."

He runs a hand across her shoulder, more an attempt to calm himself than to calm her. Tom appears next to him, watching with amusement. "What's wrong?"

Dream turns to him and feels his knees go weak when he sees Tom is holding a dagger.

"Tom, no," Dream says.

"No, what?" Tom asks him.

"My lord, no," Dream corrects himself, shielding the unicorn with his body.

"That's fine Dream, but what are you so concerned about?" Tom asks him, inspecting the insignia on the handle.

"You can't kill her," Dream says, standing up straight and broadening his shoulders to shield the unicorn, who has begun to grow distressed.

"I didn't say I was going to," Tom tells him, raising an eyebrow. "I just need a few hairs from its tail, that's all. I bought you because you're decent with animals."

Tom hands him the dagger and steps back. Dream lets out a sigh of relief in his mind.

"Sorry, just, I didn't think defiling magical creatures would be a good idea," Dream nervously laughs out.

"I'm not somebody you should be concerned about in regards to defiling magic," Tom sneers at him. "Get on with it, then."

"Apologies, my lord," Dream says, looking down at the ground as he swallows.

He's careful as he removes a hundred or so strands of hair from the unicorn's tail, careful to cut from a place nobody would notice. She doesn't seem to mind and stands still.

He hands the hairs and the dagger back to Tom. Tom pockets the hairs, and cuts the rope keeping the unicorn's hoof in place. As the rope falls to the ground, it dissipates like it had never even been there. The unicorn bolts, and the sight of it gone unharmed sends relief directly into Dream's bloodstream.

They head on back to the castle, and Tom stops him for a moment.

"You're real skittish these days, Dream. Having second thoughts?" Tom asks him, the dagger in his pocket glinting dangerously in the moonlight.

"No," Dream says, and it's technically not a lie because he's made up his mind.

He's getting out of this.

Chapter End Notes

i saw a post today that said "ao3 writers always try and squeeze in all 3 members in the narrative like their life depends on it FUKKKK.... why sapnap da bus driver all of da sudden" as i WAS WRITING IN SAPNAP AS A BEATER ARE YOU KIDDING ME??

anyways yeah,,, hi guys hope your days was good. thank u all so much for the super sweet comments you are seriously spoiling me.
hope u all had a good day/night/afternoon!
as always i love knowing what u all think and ill see u in the next one :)

Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Hogwarts is the only real home George has ever known.

He considers everyone in this castle family, despite how exhausting they can get at times. He loves these people, he really does, but it doesn't stop him from thinking murderous thoughts when he gets assigned to oversee detention the night he's supposed to be hanging out with Dream.

It doesn't happen that frequently, and George apologizes profusely, and Dream is never upset with him, but the irrational part of his mind urges him to ditch so he can spend another evening in Dream's arms as he slowly but surely heals the scar on George's back.

George lies to himself every day when he tells himself it's just about the scar, and that what he feels for Dream is nothing more than a silly crush.

"You're always so eager to get undressed," Dream teases, but he holds his arms out for George to climb into.

George does without hesitation. He doesn't even know how exhausted he is half the time until he's sinking into Dream's embrace, legs on either side of him. He indulges himself occasionally, wondering what it would be like to fall asleep here, safe.

"Don't act like you don't enjoy it," George says back, digging his chin into Dream's shoulder, angling his head so his hair hides the redness of his cheeks. "I'm not even undressed, you're the one that offered to feel me up in the first place."

"I'm just joking," Dream says into his ear as his hands feel for the scar.

The vertical line only reaches a little below his waist now, thanks to Dream. It's a slow process, but Dream insists he doesn't mind. It's dangerous because George knows he should pull away before he does anything stupid, like fall in love.

"You don't even know what you are to me," Dream says, laughing into his ear as he pulls George closer to his chest. "You don't even understand, George, what you've done for me. I'm never going to be able to make it up to you. I'll tell you, one day, as soon as I can, I promise."

Dream does that sometimes. Speaks vaguely about nothing, promises an explanation in the future. George lets him, doesn't demand details for fear of ruining the balance. He trusts Dream. He'll open up in due time.

Being here, away from the hustle and bustle of the castle is nice. It's a stolen moment of peace; head underwater as the storm rages above them.

"How'd you learn to heal like this?" George says into Dream's shoulder, shifting closer.

"My mother is a healer," Dream says. "She taught me when I was small."

Silence.

"I'm not too close with my family anymore," Dream admits. "I started doing poorly in school, and my brother was a bit of an overachiever. I kind of slip into the shadows in comparison."

George had never heard anything more preposterous in his life.

"Wandless magic is extremely difficult, you must've been really skilled if you learned so young," George says, bringing his arms up to wrap around Dream's shoulders.

Dream's fingers trail away from the scar, circling around to find a home on George's waist. They pull apart for a moment and look at each other, an intensity in Dream's eyes he hasn't seen before.

"There are more difficult things," Dream finally says, offering a small smile.

"Tom!" George calls out when he sees him outside the Slytherin common room. "Hello!"

Tom turns to see George and smiles pleasantly, walking towards him. Malfoy, Black, and Nott trail behind him. They glance at George, and Black's facial expression sours, but they refrain from making any comments.

"Hello George, everything alright?" Tom asks.

"Everything is good, thank you, yourself?"

They make small talk for a little, George updates him on the Winter Ball preparations.

"Have you seen Dream by any chance?" George asks. "I just need to tell him something."

"Dream's in the common room," Tom says. "But I don't reckon he'll be coming out of there anytime soon."

The entourage of boys surrounding him snicker.

"Gentlemen, come on," Tom says, but he bites back a ghost of a smile as well.

"Oh, is everything alright?" George questions, feeling a little worried. "We just had plans to study tonight, but I had something pop up."

He doesn't know why he's lying, George knew damn well they weren't going to study.

"He's finally got the moxie to ask Parkinson out," Tom says. "Good on him. Gets all stutter-y whenever we ask him about her. The boy's whipped."

George's heart drops to his stomach. *Her.*

As if on cue, the door to the Slytherin common room slides open, and Dream walks out with a smile that could kill, and a girl wrapped around his arm.

George recognizes her immediately. Amelie Parkinson. She's sweet - was his bench partner for potions in year four. Blonde hair pulled into a neat ponytail, brilliant blue eyes glittering, and the apples of her cheeks rouged softly. He hates that. He wishes she was hideous and mean and horrible, but that wouldn't make sense next to Dream at all.

Dream. His eyes meet George's and he expects some sort of hesitation, some sort of admission of guilt. Dream just smiles at George, like he's expected to be happy with him and it slices George

into pieces. This is worse, somehow.

What if he'd had to sit with Dream after this and listen to him talk about how he asked her? He'd never even brought her up until now.

"George, hey," Dream says as he walks up to him, snapping George out of his thoughts.

"Hey," George responds, and his voice comes out soft as he tries to swallow the lump in his throat.
"Just wanted to tell you I'm busy tonight, I can't help with homework."

"Oh," Dream says disappointedly, and George wants to hate him right now, but he can't. "That's alright, are we good for tomorrow?"

"I'll let you know, I'm a little busy this week," George forces himself to say.

Stupid. This delusion he has in his head where him and Dream gallop off into the sunset is stupid. Every bone in his body is screaming for him to stop, find a way to Dream and demand an explanation, but he's not sure if he can take one. Is there even an explanation? Perhaps Dream had just assumed George wasn't interested in talking about girls.

He's walking off, humiliation burning in his chest.

It hurts.

It hurts because he hadn't even had a chance, and some small part of him had to know. He'd done this to himself. Dream didn't owe him a relationship because he was nice to him in public and knew some of George's secrets. What George feels, *how* George feels towards Dream was obviously one sided.

He slams open the room where detention is being held. Charles Potter is sitting on the desk, attempting to juggle three owl shaped paperweights. He turns when he sees George, dropping two paperweights to the floor.

"Wingardium Leviosa," George calls, thrusting his arm out harshly to prevent them from shattering into pieces.

The paperweights stop right before they meet the ground, and George carefully magicks them back onto the desk.

"He's so quick," a voice calls from the middle of the room, and George turns to see Sapnap sitting on one of the tables in the third row.

"Well if he was slower, I'd reckon we'd be in the lead for the Quidditch cup by now," Charles says, looking at George with faux annoyance. "Alright there, George?"

"I'm splendid," George announces. "Is this who I'm watching?"

"Yeah," Charles says, glaring at Sapnap. "If he stayed out of trouble, it would make my life a hell of a lot easier. Thanks for covering today, by the way. I've got to help Slughorn prepare vials of Vervain infusion, which is marginally more exciting."

George bites back a laugh. "Yeah, I'm sure it is."

"Behave," Charles orders Sapnap as he exits, to which he sarcastically salutes in response.

When the door closes, George sighs and sits at the chair. "What're you in for?"

“It was an accident,” Sapnap immediately defends himself. “I understand it’s my third offence, but in my defence-”

“What did you do?” George asks, leaning back in his chair.

American accent. Like Dream’s.

“I accidentally set fire to one of the portraits,” Sapnap says quietly. “*Accidentally.*”

“Why are you- how?” George laughs even though he shouldn’t.

Sapnap shifts so he’s on his knees on the desk, motioning for George to toss him a paperweight. George obliges, and waits for the story.

“So, we won the game against Slytherin because we had more points, but they caught the snitch, yeah?” Sapnap starts, and George nods.

It was a fantastic game to watch.

“So we thought it would be funny to steal the snitch, but it went a little haywire, and it was about to lodge itself inside the Fat Lady painting, so I set it on fire in a moment of panic.”

“You set an unhinged flying ball of metal on fire? That was your solution?” George asks incredulously.

“It deterred it from ruining the painting! The frame is just a little burnt, so if you think about it, I’m actually a hero,” Sapnap says as he huffs, crossing his arms over his chest.

“Of course. Where’s your medal?” George asks sarcastically.

“I don’t know! They should-”

“They should engrave *the biggest idiot* on your medal. I’ll make you one myself actually, once we’re out of here,” George says.

Sapnap tosses the paperweight at George’s head, which he catches with his hands.

“Come on now, I’m *quick,*” George grins. “You’ll have to do better than that.”

“I’m done trying to kiss ass and get out early,” Sapnap grumbles. “If you’re going to be such a twit.”

“You’re from America, yes?” George asks.

He knows that this is technically supposed to be a punishment for Sapnap, and they aren’t supposed to talk, but the need for a distraction at the moment overrules the desire to be responsible.

“No,” Sapnap responds sarcastically. “How’d you guess?”

“Why would you come here if you’ve got a perfectly fine magic school back home?” George presses.

“My parents don’t like the whole muggle-blood inclusivity thing they’re doing at Ilvermorny,” Sapnap explains. “There’s a handful of us here for that reason actually - Agatha, she’s in fourth year right now, but she’s doing alright, hasn’t turned into a Grindelwald follower so-”

“Dream?” George interrupts before his mind can comprehend what his mouth is saying.

“Uh, yeah, him too. Don’t know him too well, but his father works with mine,” Sapnap says offhandedly. “His brother used to babysit me - *terrifying*, that one.”

The logical part of him says that now serves as an opportunity to not talk about Dream, to distract himself, potentially distance himself-

“He’s very nice, Dream,” George is saying anyway. “We’ve become friends this year.”

Then he feels embarrassed. There was no need to share that information.

“Huh, good for him,” Sapnap says offhandedly. “I never would have thought.”

George is confused.

“What is that supposed to mean?” George asks, anger and defensiveness rising in his chest.

Sapnap seems to understand this and puts both his hands up in surrender.

“Hey, I don’t mean that as a jab at you,” he starts. “Dream’s just always been very involved with his parents. But I don’t know him all too well, maybe he’s not anymore.”

That provides no clarity. Dread sits in George’s stomach.

“What does that mean?” he asks. “If you don’t mind telling me.”

Sapnap pauses, glancing to the left and right of him, and motions for George to come closer. George slides himself off the desk at the front and sits down next to Sapnap who leans in to whisper in his ear.

“His parents are kind of intense with the pureblood supremacy thing. I mean, mine are too, but not the way his are.”

Something about that feels sinister.

“You’re a muggleborn, yes?” Sapnap asks.

George nods.

“I don’t mean to scare you George, and Hogwarts does an okay job at preventing it, but just- I’d recommend you be careful, yeah? I’ve heard people talking, saying things, and as far as I know it’s all just rumours, but Grindelwald’s got friends in some corners.”

“He’s afraid though, isn’t he? Of Hogwarts. Dumbledore’s here, it isn’t like he can try anything,” George whispers back.

Sapnap swallows, eyes flickering around for a moment again. “I can’t tell you the details here. You can never be sure what’s safe and what’s not. If you’d like, take me to the forbidden forest for detention tomorrow. We can talk there. There’s a lot more going on than Headmaster Dippet wants to admit.”

George feels uncertainty and fear slither around in his stomach. He thanks Sapnap, and tells him he’ll see what he can do to get them to a place where they can talk openly.

“Out of curiosity,” George asks. “Why are you telling me this?”

“I don’t support the war,” Sapnap nervously says back, in a low voice. “It isn’t right. My parents threw a fit when I got sorted to Gryffindor, but they tolerate it because they know I’m friends with Charles, and Potter is a huge pureblood name even back home. I’m kind of sticking my neck out, but I won’t get anything more than a slap on the wrist, honestly. I can take that, if I can warn a few people.”

“That’s very noble of you,” George tells him, and Sapnap laughs shortly.

“Just be careful is all. You never know who you can trust these days,” Sapnap says as George locks up the classroom for the night.

George makes a mental note to himself to ask around for more details. When he’s walking back to his dorm, he sees Dream with Tom.

“George!” Dream calls after him.

“Hey Dream, I’m just tired tonight, can we talk later?” George cuts him off.

He doesn’t have the emotional strength to hear Dream talk about a girl today. Dream looks confused for a moment, and even hurt, and George feels horrible for potentially ruining their friendship.

“Alright, hope you feel rested, I’ll see you soon,” Dream says meaningfully.

George nods, forcing a tight lipped smile to Dream, bids Tom goodnight and walks up to the Ravenclaw towers, heart and mind heavy.

Chapter End Notes

i ran a poll on my twitter whether we want to establish sapnap as a character (i can't leave him out guys i just CANT) or not in this and it was overwhelmingly yes so he's here!

(if you want updates on things u can go check me out on there @angelbeachcat im pretty active and i tell my silly little jokes maybe i'll post snippets but i'm afraid of spoiling things we'll see we'll just take it as it goes honestly)

also im going to be honest i am not up to date on the fantastic beast films hence the minimal focus on grindelwald despite the fact i know he was very powerful during this time but yk what this isnt about him. this is about Dream And George

i also told myself the chapters were to be 2.1k words at MOST but ive been climbing up to nearly 2.4k which is lovely (this was also supposed to be considerably shorter like i was supposed to be done by now this wasn't supposed to be slowburn this was supposed to be fast burn but we're here so fuck the plan i guess)

hope you're all doing well, and thank you for reading! :)

Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Professor Dumbledore? It’s George, from Ravenclaw. The seventh year prefect. Could I come in please?”

George has never been in Professor Dumbledore’s office before, usually opting to meet in other spaces. There isn’t a reason for him to be as nervous as he is right now, aside from the unusually heavy query he’s here to pose, but it isn’t like he’s going to be angry with George.

It was very fair, actually, that George asks. He’s well within his rights to know, as a muggle-born student.

The wooden door creaks open, and Dumbledore’s voice beckons him in.

“Come in George, I’m just a little preoccupied with something.”

George sees a staircase, which he climbs up before he sees a room. He steps in, glancing at the walls. There’s a sort of organized chaos - books stacked on top of each other in ways that defied the laws of physics, lamps and gadgets he hadn’t seen before.

He makes a mental note to ask Dream of what that spinning glass ball might be, whenever he stops avoiding him.

Professor Dumbledore’s back is to him as he waves his wand at the stained glass window, and George watches as the colours rearrange to create a phoenix.

“It’s lovely,” George says before he can stop himself. “The window.”

Dumbledore turns and smiles warmly at him, eyes twinkling. “Thank you. Have a seat, George.”

George obliges, shifting to get comfortable.

“What brings you into my office today?” Dumbledore asks, clasping his hands together and resting them on his desk.

“I had a question, actually, if you don’t mind answering. About Grindelwald, sir.”

Dumbledore looks at him for a moment before nodding understandingly, adjusting his hat. “What is it you want to know?”

George swallows, glancing back at the window, where the glass design of the phoenix flickers, giving the illusion of it actually flying.

“I just, I wasn’t aware until recently of how much power he actually had, and I was just a little bit frightened,” George confesses. “I’ve heard some rumours, sir...”

Dumbledore looks interested at this, and leans forward.

“I’ve just heard, and it may all be speculation, I don’t know, I’m not sure, that he may have some followers in the castle. I was wondering if there was any information you could give me, sir, just as a prefect so I could help support the other muggle-born students. I’ve held off alright on my own,

but just to be sure,” George finishes.

“That’s very thoughtful of you George, prioritizing the safety of your classmates,” Dumbledore starts. “Grindelwald’s interests lie more so with control over muggles, not muggle-borns. However, I’m curious to know what people are saying, if you don’t mind sharing.”

George exhales slowly.

“Well, nothing out of the ordinary sir, just a few students harassing some of the younger students, but it’s all been dealt with through Headmaster Dippet,” George says. “I haven’t seen any attempts at anything truly sinister.”

“Yes, I heard what happened with Alphard Black and Abraxas Malfoy. It was a Ravenclaw prefect actually, that held the both of them off.”

“That was me, sir,” George says sheepishly.

Dumbledore looks impressed for a moment, and he smiles at George gently.

“Well I can’t say I’m surprised, I’ve seen you go on the Quidditch pitch. You’re quick,” Dumbledore says.

“Thank you, I’ve been practicing,” George responds. “Just, I would like to be kept in the loop if there are any developments. My involvement with the wizarding world during the summer is limited.”

Dumbledore looks at him sympathetically for a moment.

“You’re not headed home after the year, are you George?”

“Um, no. I’m figuring it out, but likely not. I don’t think I can,” George says quietly.

Dumbledore reaches out, puts a hand on one of George’s. It’s the most physical affection he’s had since he’s been avoiding Dream, and it nearly makes him burst into tears.

His thoughts become intrusive for a moment, and he wonders if Dream will hold the girl the same way he holds him and the visual makes him sick. The idea of his hands on anyone but George makes red, hot anger bubble in his chest.

It doesn’t matter though. Dream isn’t his boyfriend.

“Is it healing alright?” Dumbledore asks, and George’s heart twists painfully.

“Yeah, it’s been healing. The scarring’s going away too, no need to worry,” he says reassuringly.

The door to Dumbledore’s office opens. Dumbledore looks at him apologetically.

“I’m glad. George, if anything or anyone is troubling you, my office doors are always open. I do have another meeting right now, but you’re free to stay for it.”

“Professor,” Tom Riddle’s voice calls as he clamours up the staircase.

George turns his head and smiles at him. “Hello Tom.”

“Oh, hello George, sorry, I hope I wasn’t interrupting,” Tom says as he flushes red, hand scratching the back of his head self consciously.

"Not at all, I was just leaving. Thank you, professor," George says, smiling at Dumbledore one last time as he goes to leave.

"Oh, by the way George, Dream was asking for you," Tom adds. "He's in the library right now, I believe."

"One moment, Tom, I'm just going to walk George out," Dumbledore says, following George down the staircase.

Once they're at the bottom, Dumbledore places a hand on George's shoulder.

"That boy, Dream," he starts. "Is he bothering you, George?"

George stares up at Dumbledore bewilderedly. "No professor, he's my friend. Why?"

"No reason," Dumbledore says, but George doesn't believe it.

"Is there something I should be aware of, professor?" George asks.

Dumbledore shakes his head no. "Nothing at all, just a little on edge with everything is all. Thank you for your time today George, if there's anything I can do for you, just let me know."

George bids him farewell, but doesn't forget.

—
Dream misses George.

George has been avoiding him all week, making excuses of detention supervision duties and ball preparations, but Dream isn't stupid. Was George upset he hadn't told him about asking Amelie to come with him? He didn't think it was an important detail. Perhaps George was just bored of him. It hurts a little to think about. He thought he'd at least have a little while longer until that happened.

It has, however, given him the chance to learn a few things to protect himself.

He has a sneaking suspicion that Tom has been reading his mind. He always appears whenever Dream is in need of something most, always knows just what to provide. Dream is aware that he very much opens up to anyone willing to give him positive attention, enforce his self esteem.

Tom being a legilimens? Hardly surprising information, should it be true.

So he learns the charm of the book in the pureblood rhetoric, disguises occlumency guides as blood supremacy texts, and plays the loyal dog in Tom's meetings.

"Alphard," Dream says, rolling over in his bed to look at his roommate, who is reading on the floor.

Alphard grunts a noise of acknowledgement. He's been grumpier with Dream as of lately.

"What're you so upset about?" He asks amusedly, propping himself up on his elbow.

"I was going to ask Amelie to the dance, but I suppose there's no use to that," Alphard says, clenching his jaw.

Dream laughs, which is the wrong thing to do because Alphard sits up and points his wand at him. "Relax," Dream says, raising an eyebrow. "I don't understand why you're making such a big deal out of this. You should've told me beforehand if it was going to be such a problem."

"My problem is you don't even like her!" Alphard shouts.

"She's my date to the ball, not my bride, you git," Dream says, drawing his wand as well. "I'm not duelling you for her. If you want to ask her, feel free to do so, and if she chooses you then the two of you can go."

"You know damn well she won't," Alphard bitterly spits. "She doesn't care about me, don't think she's said two words to me that weren't related to school."

It is far too early in the day for him to be giving love advice to Alphard Black. Hell will freeze over before he seriously does that.

"Well, ask out another girl," Dream says, laying back down.

"You don't even like her," Alphard repeats. "You're an arse, Dream."

Dream rolls his eyes and doesn't bother to respond.

"I could ruin you, with the information I have," Alphard continues. "The only thing protecting you from me doing so is Abraxas and Tom. Abraxas thinks it would be cruel, but I hardly think so. The truth deserves to be announced. And I cannot for the life of me figure out what Tom sees in you--"

"What's this information you're going to ruin me with, hm, Abraxas?" Dream asks, just to entertain him.

Still, a jolt of panic shoots through him.

He's been careful, hasn't he? With his extra defence against the dark art books, with his occlumency and personal studies. There's no way. If Alphard tells Tom, he can always lie and make something up about rhetorical research. His occlumency's gotten decent enough for him to hide those thoughts and ideas, he has to be safe for now.

"You're messing around with that little queer, that's the truth I'm going to ruin you with," Alphard laughs.

Dream forces himself to look confused. "Who?"

"Don't play dumb with me Dream, it's been a rumour for ages now, but this all but confirms it. And it makes sense, too."

"You're going to have to elaborate, because I haven't a clue what you're talking about," Dream states, feeling his heart beat faster, faster.

"George is a queer, and so are you. And the two of you are messing around, and that's where you disappear at night. Do you think I'm stupid, Dream?"

"Where I go at night is none of your business, Alphard," Dream sneers.

"Alright, but it is Tom's. You wouldn't mind it I told--"

Dream tackles Alphard to the floor, knocking his wand out of his hand. Alphard struggles to get out of his grip, and damn, he's strong, but Dream's height allows him to subdue him.

"Don't you dare," Dream says. "Stick your nose into my business. Your jealousy and baseless accusations—"

"Clearly not baseless, since they work you up so much," Alphard laughs, and before Dream fully comprehends what he's saying, he punches Alphard in the nose.

Alphard laughs harder, like this is the funniest thing in the world to him.

"Finishing up your boyfriend's job, yeah? Go ahead Dream, confirm my suspicions," Alphard sarcastically drawls, and Dream forces himself to speak.

"Tom says I can keep him."

Alphard looks up at him, confused.

"He's not my boyfriend, and I've got no idea if he's queer, but I don't care too much if I'm being honest with you," Dream breathes out, his voice cold. "Tom says to keep an eye on him, and he's mine, so keep your claws off. For your sake, not his."

He stands up, looking down at Alphard who stares right through him, eyes blank.

"I'm taking Amelie to the dance because I like her. Learn to cope, or fight me for it like a *man*."

He walks out, feeling sick with everything, everyone, with himself.

George would be devastated if he had heard the way Dream had spoken about him, like he was property. He has to find him, has to tell him before Alphard does when he snaps out of his bitch coma, has to fix this.

He wanders into the Great Hall, but George isn't there. He spots a familiar face.

"Davies!"

Davies turns to look at him, and offers a forced smile.

"Do you know where George is? I need to speak with him. Now, please. I don't know why he's avoiding me, and I need to fix it."

Davies looks around for a second. "I don't know if George wants—"

"Please, Davies," Dream begs, a moment away from dropping to his knees and wringing his hands.

Davies looks at him hesitantly for a moment, before giving in.

"He's at the pitch, with Wilbur."

Dream thanks him and rushes out there, to where he spots George in the air, laughing as he flips upside down on his broom to catch a practice snitch. Wilbur is floating on a broom right next to him. There's a boy in Gryffindor robes that looks familiar there too, trying to knock George off with a Quaffle.

"George," he calls as loudly as he can. "George!"

George turns to see him, and the smile slowly disappears. Dream's chest hurts for a moment, but he swallows it down.

"Can we talk for a moment, please?" he asks, and George lowers himself to the ground.

"What're you doing here, Dream?" George asks, and Dream pretends the way he says it doesn't feel like needles in his skin.

"I wanted to see you, it's been a while. Can we talk? Please?" he asks, glancing over at George's friends who have also lowered themselves to the ground.

He recognizes the Gryffindor boy, Sapnap, now that he can see him clearly.

"What's he want, George?" Sapnap asks, not looking away from Dream.

"Nothing, I'm just going to talk to him quickly," George says, pulling Dream aside.

"I gotta talk to you, George," Dream repeats.

"What is it?" George asks, and the words sound exasperated.

Dream wilts.

"I just- I haven't seen you in so long. How's your back?"

"It's fine," George answers shortly.

"I just- I can't talk about it right now, but tonight please? In the room? Please?" Dream begs, and George looks like he wants to say no.

"George, please? Are you okay? Have I done anything wrong?"

George shakes his head no.

"I'll see you tonight, yeah," George finally says, some half attempt at a smile is all he leaves Dream with before he rushes back onto the pitch.

Dream watches him go.

Chapter End Notes

hello hi everyone :) thank you all for your super sweet comments on the last chapter at the time of publishing i haven't had the chance to respond yet but i will do so asap! thank you all for reading, would love to know your thoughts as always, hope you all liked this chapter and see you in the next one!!

Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Dream can't hide his disappointment when George sits next to him on the couch instead of on his lap.

"Don't you wanna let me heal you?" he asks in dismay, and George slowly shakes his head no.

"Not tonight, if that's okay."

"Yeah, of course. Your call. Everything is okay in regards to that, right? Like, there aren't any adverse side effects to the healing? I've never had that before, but I've never healed anything that large, so I-"

"Dream," George cuts him off, holding out a hand. "It's fine, seriously."

It's fine.

Then why does it feel like it's not?

"You've been avoiding me," Dream states, because it's a fact and not a question. "After I asked Amelie to the ball."

George nods ever so slightly. This is the part where Dream puts together the pieces, where he's disgusted by him, where he thinks George has manipulated him into being his friend. Dream is going to be repulsed by the idea of him touching him.

Everything inside of him aches. Maybe he should've taken up Dream on his offer, to feel him one last time, but that would be manipulative and wrong.

Dream deserves better.

"Are you upset? That I didn't tell you about her?" Dream asks, and George can't even look at him because he looks so distressed. "Because-"

"No, Dream, it's fine. You don't owe me any details of your life," George says, the words coming out crueler than he means for them to.

"I just- it wasn't some huge premeditated thing. Tom just asked me once if there were any girls I fancied, and I panicked and said her name because it was the first one I could think of, y'know? And then, I don't know, he said I should ask her to the ball, so I did."

George laughs. He can't help it. "You let your boys pick out your dates for you?"

"Well, I've never been too good at talking to girls, if I'm being honest. Don't laugh, but yeah. And I just, I've been meaning to talk to you about that," Dream says. "Can I- if it's okay, can I..."

He exhales loudly. How do you ask for someone to hold you without coming off like a child?

Dream doesn't ask with words. He just puts his head on George's thigh tentatively and looks up at him for a reaction. At first, George tenses, and Dream feels he's overstepped and moves to get off, but then George pulls him back and threads his fingers through Dream's hair.

It's wrong. Dream is taking advantage of his kindness. He's sitting here and basking in the light of whatever it is that makes George so unabating, spending his free time with people that would hurt him if they got the chance to.

When George finds out, he's never going to want to see Dream again.

The reality sets in, tears welling up in Dream's eyes before he even understands what's happening.

"I made a mistake, George. I'm so sorry. I just, I don't want you to hate me, but you should."

George goes to wipe the tear from Dream's cheek, but Dream swats his hand away. Then, he looks up at George, eyes full to the brim with some sort of intense emotion, before he closes them.

"I'm sorry, I'm so sorry," Dream says again, his voice cracking in the middle of the words.

George feels horrible. He pulls Dream to his chest, the way Dream holds him when he's healing him, guiding his legs to wrap around his hips. Dream is considerably larger than him, but George adjusts himself so the position isn't as uncomfortable.

"It's okay, Dream, I forgive you," he whispers into Dream's ear, rubbing a hand up and down his back.

"You don't even know what I did," Dream chokes out, wrapping his arms around George's shoulders. "But I swear George, I didn't know. I had no idea, I didn't even know half of it. I wish I didn't do it, I don't want to anymore."

"Whenever you're ready to tell me, I'll be here, but I forgive you," George says.

They sit there for a moment, and Dream wants to tell him everything right then and there, but he can't. Because if he does, he endangers George, paints a target over his back.

George's hands are shaking as he reaches for the hem of Dream's shirt.

"Is this okay?" he asks, and Dream nods, pressing his cheek against George's shoulder.

George's hands hesitantly come in contact with the skin of Dream's stomach. He touches with his palms, stabilizing Dream as he shakes. Slowly, one of his hands ends up over Dream's heart, while the other is in between his shoulder blades.

"What're you doing?" Dream asks, as he looks at George.

"You're in pain," George says, his voice trembling. "I can't- I can't do the thing that you can do, with your hands, can't heal like you can, but I'm trying to help. Some sort of, I guess, some kind of emotional healing."

"George," Dream whispers.

His name on Dream's lips. It trembles with emotion, the loudest truth Dream has ever spoken.

"I love you, George," Dream says, pressing his forehead against George's collar. "I love you so much."

The words cut through every nerve in George's body and put them back together. He's getting torn apart and healed at the same time.

There were times when George would sit in church as a child, on his knees before the cross,

uncomprehending of what the preacher meant when he proclaimed that love was suffering.

Every cry in reverence he's ever heard for a higher power tore through him, created a pit in his stomach, made him feel he would never satiate the will of something bigger. Here he is, Dream in his arms, frail and determined, and he understands faith for the first time.

"I love you, Dream," he says back, and the words take from him, but he's never been so willing to give.

"I don't agree with what my friends say," Dream tells him like he needs George to believe him. "I don't agree with anything they say. I don't want to be there anymore."

"You don't have to be," George says, pressing down on Dream's chest, feeling his heartbeat.

"I'm going to stop," Dream promises. "I just have to get out of something first, but I'm going to. Please believe me."

"I believe you," George promises, shifting his hands to Dream's waist, pulling him closer, closer.

The next day when Sapnap sees George in the dining hall, he looks tired.

"You alright there George?" he asks, and George nods as he yawns, reaching for a blueberry scone.

"Yeah, I just can't be bothered with Charms right now if I'm being honest."

"What happened with Dream?" Sapnap blurts out, taking a seat directly across from him. "He seemed pretty keen to talk to you."

"Uh yeah, we had a bit of a miscommunication, we made up though," George says, guilt pooling in his stomach.

What he should've done was tell Dream he had feelings for him and that it wasn't fair to either of them to continue, but he couldn't leave him when he was being vulnerable like that.

What kind of things has Dream experienced to make him so upset, so sure George will hate him? As far as George is concerned, he could never hate Dream.

"Did he do anything to you?" Sapnap presses, and George shakes his head no.

"No! He's my friend, nothing's wrong."

It isn't convincing enough, because Sapnap doesn't look like he believes him. Regardless, he doesn't press any further, and George is thankful.

"I found out more things today," Sapnap says quietly. "About the whole ordeal. Want to meet after classes to talk about it?"

"I have a match today," George says apologetically. "Can we do it in the evening? I think you have

detention anyways, so I'll just take you off of Charles' hands. We can go in the forest, Slughorn needs us to collect fern."

Sapnap nods, then stands up. "I'll see you then. I have to go to Defence Against the Dark Arts in a minute anyways."

When evening falls, and George tells Charles he can cover his detention duties, he's relieved. Sapnap is obnoxiously loud as they trek out at first, and George threatens to put a leash on him.

"I'm just scaring the monsters away," Sapnap defends himself.

"We've got our wands on us, there's no monsters here tonight. What was it you wanted to tell me?"

Sapnap's expression turns much more grave.

"Grindelwald is at the height of his power at the moment. Did you manage to talk to Dumbledore, by the way?"

George nods. "He told me that there isn't too much source for concern at Hogwarts, since Grindelwald concerns himself with wizard supremacy and not pureblood supremacy."

"So far," Sapnap adds. "He's going to go for the muggle-borns next, it's inevitable."

"Well I'm sure," George says. "But he's not going to succeed. He's very much still a minority. The majority of wizards are half-bloods, and they can't be supremacists, right?"

"You'd be surprised," Sapnap says. "This whole pureblood thing they raise us with, it's unbelievable George. They outright lie to us our entire lives."

George wonders if that has anything to do with what Dream is always so worked up about. If he's worried that George will hate him for carrying the beliefs of his parents, he has nothing to worry about. He doesn't have them anymore, clearly. He makes a mental note to tell Dream about this.

"A lot of these pureblood houses are nasty to their children," Sapnap says, breaking the silence. "Makes them come out all mean. It's very sad."

George nods, holding out a hand to stop the two of them, before gesturing at the ground. "Ferns."

Him and Sapnap get onto their knees, and George shows him how to twist the stem so they come out of the ground nicely.

"That's what happened with Dream's brother, supposedly," Sapnap whispers.

George's blood runs cold. "What do you mean?"

"I mean, it's all talk, and a lot of it is just gossip," Sapnap says. "But..."

"What happened?" George asks, the dread gripping his heart.

"I've heard his brother was a loud kid, made friends with everyone," Sapnap starts. "Had muggle friends too. His parents didn't take too kindly to that."

George's heart drops to his feet. Oh no.

"He disappeared for a summer - stopped coming around for tea, stopped seeing people. When his

brother came back from Hogwarts for the summer in third year, he was brand new. Studious and quiet.”

Oh no.

“What did they do to him?” George asks in a whisper, and Sapnap shakes his head no.

“I haven’t got a clue.”

The silence is heavy, and George distracts himself by organizing the ferns in their basket.

“It’s rumoured that Dumbledore is going to duel Grindelwald,” Sapnap says. “They were friends before, y’know.”

George frowns as he turns to look at Sapnap. “What?”

“Yeah, but then something happened between the two of them. Dumbledore’s been working to bring him down since.”

They stand up, basket sufficiently full of ferns and begin to make their way towards the end of the forest.

“Dream,” Tom says, and Dream whips his head around to look at Tom.

It’s a cold night today, and Dream has no desire to do anything but lay in bed. Still, he’s stuck working on the History of Magic homework. It’s not the most boring thing in the world - on the contrary, it’s probably one of the more interesting ones, but that doesn’t mean he enjoys writing out pages and pages.

“Hello my lord, what brings you here?”

“I need to collect more unicorn hairs,” Tom informs him. “Come with me.”

So Dream does.

He feels Tom pick around in his mind and brings Amelie to the forefront of it. She’s got lovely blonde hair and blue eyes. She’s very smart too.

“How’s it going with Amelie?” Tom asks, and it all but confirms Dream’s suspicions.

He doesn’t dare try and read Tom’s mind. Tom would probably have his head on a platter and his memory erased from everyone’s mind before the sun came up.

“It’s going well, she’s very nice. Don’t know if I want to see her after the ball, if I’m being honest though.”

“Oh?” Tom asks, opening the door to the castle so they can walk out.

“Yes, my lord. I feel my time would be better spent on other things,” Dream says.

Tom hums a noise of approval. “I’ve set another trap in the thick of the forest. You’ll do everything in regards to that, I’ll get us back into the castle. There should be nobody else out here.”

They arrive at the same clearing as last time, and sure enough, a unicorn is caught in the trap. By

the looks of it, it's an older male the time, and he thrashes his leg around.

Dream curses under his breath.

"This might take a moment," he warns as Tom hands him a dagger. "By the way Tom, out of curiosity, is it possible to steal these from the potions room instead?"

"Slughorn counts his ingredients meticulously ever since the incident in fifth year," Tom says coldly. "It's such a bother, to have to replace everything."

Dream hardly thinks a bother is the appropriate way to describe the incident from fifth year, but he doesn't have the time to engage in a conversation about that right now.

"Hi," he says, holding out a hand for the unicorn as a peace offering.

The unicorn looks at him warily, and sees the dagger in his hand.

"I'm not going to hurt you, just need something," he promises, keeping a hand on his back as he approaches the tail of the unicorn.

He feels a little ridiculous talking to the unicorn, but it calms him down.

He successfully manages to cut a sufficient number of hairs from the tail, when Tom decides to speak.

"Are you finished?" Tom asks, and it startles the unicorn.

It kicks its hind leg wildly, and Dream curses as it hits him in the face, causing him to fall back.

"Yeah," Dream gasps, feeling for his nose. When he drags his fingers away, they're painted red.

Fantastic.

"You ought to teach it a lesson," Tom hisses, drawing his wand.

"No! Tom, don't," Dream says, throwing himself between Tom's wand and the unicorn.

Tom immediately pockets his wand and goes to take the unicorn hairs from his hands, before helping him up.

"That was incredibly stupid, Dream, I could've hurt you," Tom says harshly, before pulling out his wand and pointing it at Dream's face. "Episkey."

He feels a sharp pain in his nose.

"I'm fine," he insists. "Hurting the unicorn could have led to people having suspicions of us out here, my lord."

Before Tom can protest, he rushes over and uses the dagger to cut the unicorn free. It runs away without hesitating.

Tom uses the hem of his robe to wipe the blood off of Dream's face hastily. He can't help but let his mind wander back to George - how gentle his hands are when they tend to the tears in Dream's eyes. Nobody he knows has ever bothered to be that gentle with him, like he was someone people should bother to be gentle with.

The two of them walk back to the castle in silence, before Tom stops him.

“Do you hear that?” Tom whispers, and Dream strains his ears to make out two quiet voices coming from a few feet away.

Tom puts a finger to his lips as he looks at Dream, before flicking his wand and silently casting Lumos. They step forward once, twice, before-

“Petrificus totalus!” Tom calls, and Dream hears two bodies hit the floor.

Dream stands with Tom, and the acid in his stomach turns as he sees who’s lying on the floor.

George. Sapnap.

“What are you two doing out here?” Tom asks sharply as he undoes the curse.

“It was- we were-” Sapnap stutters out, before George puts a hand on his shoulder.

“Easy there, Tom. We were collecting ferns for Slughorn. He’s got detention,” George says, frowning as he sees Tom and Dream, wands drawn. “What are you two doing here?”

For a moment, everything is silent. Then, Tom laughs.

The sound is terrifying, calculated, shrill and cold and it makes Dream want to cover his ears.

“We were collecting things for potions too, I have detention too,” Dream starts, looking pleadingly at George to stop prying.

“It’s alright Dream, they won’t remember this,” Tom says, rolling up his sleeve with the hand not holding his wand.

“Dream?” George asks, looking between him and Tom confusedly. “Tom?”

“Obliviate,” Tom says, pointing his wand at Sapnap.

Sapnap’s eyes widen for a moment before they close. He moves in a disoriented manner for a moment before George yelps and reaches out to support him.

“What? What did you do to him?” George asks, looking from Sapnap to Tom and Dream. Dream can’t even answer him.

“He’ll be okay, just won’t remember seeing us,” Tom says, before pointing his wand at Sapnap again.

George draws his wand and points it at Tom, before glancing at Dream. “Dream? What’s going on?”

“Imperio,” Tom says, pointing his wand at Sapnap and Dream feels like he’s going to be sick.

Sapnap suddenly stands upright.

“Go on Dream, now do the same to George,” Tom says, and Dream feels every muscle in his body cease up.

He wants George to hex him, to kill him, do anything to him to prevent him from having to do so. George just looks at him in shock, wand still drawn and pointed at Tom.

“Hurry,” Tom says, kicking at his shin.

“I don’t- I don’t know how to,” he whispers, and George is still gaping at him, unmoving.

Run. Run, George, go, go, go. Better yet, do something. Knock us to the floor.

“Dream,” Tom says, his voice firm. “Do it.”

So Dream points his wand at George, who lowers his arm. He’s crazy. George is fucking crazy.

He says a thousand apologies in his head before he says it. He has to use his other arm to support the one that points the wand at George, feels his jaw quiver. “Imperio.”

Nothing happens.

“You have to mean it,” Tom says, realizing now that George was too in shock to do anything.

“My parents had always suspected, but this was confirmation, that I was queer,” George breathes out the last word, shifting himself across the couch and away from Dream. Startled, Dream looks up at George, eyes screwed shut as he holds up his wand with a shaking arm.

“George,” Dream whispers, reaching out to guide George’s arm down, but George drops his wand the second Dream’s hands find him. His shoulders hunch over as he makes himself small.

“I can’t,” George whispers as he opens his eyes. “The insane part of this is that even if you tried, even if you wanted to hurt me right now, I wouldn’t do anything back to you. I can’t.”

He knows if he doesn’t mean it, Tom will. And if Tom doubts his loyalty, he screws over both him and George.

He looks in George’s eyes and tries to somehow convey to him that *it’s okay, it’s going to be okay*.

George just looks at him blankly, like he doesn’t even recognize him. It’s all happening so quick, but it’s okay, because if he does this, he can save them in the long term.

Dream exhales as he points his wand at George again, says the word with conviction this time because he knows what happens if he doesn’t. George doesn’t stop him, just continues staring a hundred miles ahead.

“Imperio.”

Chapter End Notes

this chapter is longer for no reason. i just wanted to do more with it and at first i was so up my own ass about "uNunIfOrM ChApTeR lEnGtHs" but also like genuinely who gives a fuck ill do a 20 word update next and it'll be in chatfic format thank u all for the comments on the last one i know some of you want to kill me as always comments, ideas, thoughts and everything are so so loved <3 love u guys see

you in the next one !!!

Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George's eyelids droop and he stumbles over his own feet, before Dream points his wand higher and forces him upright. He looks over at Tom, who seems surprised.

"I'll be honest, Dream, I didn't think you had it in you," Tom muses, before flicking his wand and forcing Sapnap to walk forward.

Dream imitates the movement, and George joins him. Tom pockets his wand and Dream wills for George to walk as well, and the four of them trudge on forward.

"Tom," Dream starts, legs shaking as he forces himself to continue marching towards the castle. "We didn't have to do that. We could've just said we were collecting something and we couldn't find it."

They're almost there, Dream tells himself. Just a little while longer, and he doesn't have to do this anymore. Merlin, George must hate him right now. Out of all the ways for George to find out, this had got to be one of the worst.

"I know Dream," Tom says, and it's the only answer it seems he's getting.

They walk in silence until they approach the end of the forest, when Tom clasps a hand over his shoulder.

"Get George into the Ravenclaw common room, and wipe his memory of seeing us," Tom whispers. "Then make it look like he fell asleep while reading."

Dream nods, glancing over at Sapnap, who looks like he's in a trance. Tom notices.

"I'll wipe him from seeing the Imperius curse, don't you worry. He won't even realize anything happened tomorrow morning," Tom promises. "Make sure to also clear your wand's memory."

Sapnap is a pureblood, Dream reminds himself. Tom won't do anything.

"Alright," Dream says, as Tom holds the baskets of ferns George and Sapnap were collecting in one hand, and opening the door with the other.

"I'm proud of you today, Dream," Tom says, shooting him a warm smile. "I had my doubts this year, especially with you becoming friends with him, but you've proved that you've chosen your side."

The candles flicker as Tom turns away and walks towards the Gryffindor common room, Sapnap in tow behind him.

Dream shivers, feeling sick as he walks towards the Ravenclaw towers, willing for George to follow. When they get around the corner, he looks around to make sure nobody is watching. He can't do this.

"I'm gonna pick you up," he whispers, even though George technically can't do anything to indicate he doesn't want that. He hooks an arm around George's knees and another under his shoulders, before making his way to the third floor, apologizing under his breath the whole way.

When he makes it there, he closes his eyes and wishes three times.

I need somewhere nobody can find us.

A metal door appears before them, and he uses his back to push it in. There's a large bed in the center, and he places George down on it gently.

"I'm sorry, I'm so sorry," he says again, and he's not even sure why, since George can't exactly process what he's saying.

He spells the lock twice, casting a silencing charm on the walls for good measure, before turning to George. Fuck, he's not really sure how to undo this.

"George?" he asks, in hopes that it'll work.

A moment passes before George adjusts himself so he can lean up against the headboard, looking up at Dream with wide eyes.

"Dream," George says, eyebrows furrowing in concern.

His voice is far too calm for somebody who was just put under an unforgivable curse.

"I'm so sorry," Dream repeats, sitting down on the edge of the bed. "I'm so fucking sorry."

George looks around the room, before kicking off his shoes. Dream wishes he'd say something, anything, but George just shifts in place. He feels a hand on his cheek and he flinches on instinct. He expects anger, rage, fear. He expects to be reprimanded and torn into the way he knows he should be. He's a coward for letting it get to this, so he closes his eyes and waits. Waits for George to ask him what happened, waits for him to bring his hand down on Dream's cheek again, but harsher.

"You're shaking," George notes instead and it lights something inside of Dream on fire.

"I'm shaking, George? I'm shaking? Are you serious?"

He stands up and throws his hands in the air, before turning to George and tossing his wand at him.

"I used an unforgivable curse on you, you probably have a thousand questions, and you're talking about me shaking?"

Dream laughs. It's nervous and quivery and morphs into an ugly choking sound halfway through. His hands tug at his hair. George doesn't even understand what Dream has done. He's put the final nail into George's coffin. He's doomed him forever.

"I used the Imperius curse on you!" Dream says it louder than he means to, shoulders tensing. "Do something about it!"

George watches him for a moment, before crossing his legs on the bed. Dream waits for him to take Dream's wand and snap it in half, to say something mean, to cut through him the way he deserves. George doesn't say anything, just motions for Dream to come sit with him. Dream complies, feeling the fervor drain from his body and replaced with disgust with himself for having the gall to yell at George right now.

He takes off his boots and gets on the bed.

"I'm sorry George," he repeats, and George climbs into his lap, wrapping his legs firmly around

Dream's waist.

Dream takes George's wrists in his hands, and guides George's fingers to his hair. He wants him to pull, wants him to damage him, wants him to hurt him.

"Hurt me," he says into George's ear. "George, I hurt you. Please, *please*, hurt me back."

But George is too good for him yet again, using his fingers to massage circles into Dream's scalp instead of tugging, and Dream is weak because he sinks his face into George's chest.

"You're an idiot," Dream starts, his voice muffled. "Why didn't you fight me?"

George finally speaks.

"I didn't think you'd hurt me," George says, like he has faith in Dream, like Dream is somebody worth having faith in.

"You put too much trust in me," Dream says, but he caves and pulls George closer because he can't deny himself how it feels to really hold him.

"Would you have hurt me?" George asks, and it's the easiest question Dream's ever had to answer.

"Not a chance."

"Then I didn't make a mistake," George states matter-of-factly.

"I feel like you should be far more upset than you are right now," Dream says as he lays the both of them down. "Is this okay?"

They're on their sides, face to face. George moves closer.

"Yeah, it's fine," George says. "My mind's a little fuzzy. I don't fully understand what happened, if I'm being honest. I saw you and Tom, and then he obliterated Sapnap? Why?"

"We were out getting things for his personal project," Dream says. "He's...Tom's got a lot of other things going on with him. He's not who he says he is."

George frowns.

"Did it hurt?" Dream asks, feeling the guilt he's become so familiar with and starts to find a home in his chest.

"Did what hurt? Your excuse of an Imperius curse?" George teases, but Dream doesn't laugh.

"I didn't- I need you to know that I didn't mean it the way it's supposed to be meant. I had to cast it right, and I wanted to cast it right because if I didn't, Tom would, and then that wouldn't fare well for you."

"Well," George says. "That's very touching Dream, but dark magic doesn't particularly care about your intentions. It was still wildly unsuccessful."

It's Dream's turn to be confused. "What?"

"Dream," George says, rolling his eyes and saying his name all too fondly for such a dangerous situation. "Your spell didn't go through."

“But you...” Dream trails off, looking at George who’s smiling at his perplexment.

“You think you perfected one of the darkest curses of all time in two gos? Someone’s got to get your ego in check,” George says, grinning wider like this is the funniest thing in the world. “It worked for a second, but then it wore off. I’m an alright actor, if I do say so myself.”

Dream feels both relief and horror at the same time.

“I’m still confused,” George continues, “on everything that happened. I think I’m in shock, actually. Don’t fully understand.”

This is where he has to be honest, but he stops himself. If he does go ahead and tell George everything, who’s to say Tom won’t follow up and make sure he’s done the job correctly?

It doesn’t matter. He’ll figure something out.

“What do you want to know?” Dream asks.

George stares right at him, and Dream’s stomach does a summersault. George is ridiculously good looking, that’s a fact, but seeing him up close, relaxed and unguarded after the most adrenaline inducing event he’s ever experienced is doing things to him.

“Everything,” George whispers, and he moves closer, putting his head on Dream’s chest without a care in the world.

Dream’s about to start again; tell George he shouldn’t be so quick to trust him, shouldn’t be here making friends with people who acquaint themselves with other people who want George dead. Dream and George should not be here, together, abandoning themselves and the worlds they come from for a chance to hold each other. Yet here they are.

“Tom is running a wizarding blood supremacist group,” Dream says, closing his eyes.

This seems to be the thing that brings George crashing down to reality.

George shoots up into a sitting position. “What?”

“He’s planning to do something,” Dream continues, ignoring the knot in his stomach yelling at him to stop. “I’m not exactly sure what, but it was- I’m involved in it, George.”

George looks at Dream, confused. “So you’re- what?”

“I’m not,” Dream rushes out to say. “I’m not- can I start over again?”

George’s brain seems to be comprehending just how messed up all of this is. He shifts further away from Dream, now sitting up fully. This is exactly what Dream didn’t want to happen, but he supposes what he wants isn’t the priority right now.

“George, I just, I know it’s wrong, just hear me out okay?” Dream pleads.

George fumbles around for something, grasping at his sleeves and his pockets to no avail. Dream glances at the space between the pillows and sees their wands. He reaches out, taking them in his hands.

A thud. George has fallen off the bed.

“Are you alright?” Dream asks, and he sees George sprinting towards the doors. He tugs at them

once, twice, before turning to face Dream again when they don't budge, eyes wide in disbelief.

"George," Dream tries again, taking a step towards him. "I'm not going to hurt you."

George presses his lips together firmly, putting a hand out as he closes his eyes. A warning for Dream not to come any closer.

"George, here, you can have both our wands," Dream pleads, voice cracking halfway through as he tosses them to the floor. "You can be as angry as you like, just please, let me explain it all to you."

"Well, I've been listening to you for months now, Dream, and it turns out the majority of that was lies," George spits at him. "What the hell? A pureblood supremacist group? And you're friends with him? While you're pretending to be friends with me?"

"I'm not friends with him," Dream says quickly. "I'm not- I don't agree with any of that anymore, I promise!"

"Anymore? Dream, what the hell? I thought- I didn't- what?" George snapped. "I didn't think it was this! Is this what you've been talking about? That you couldn't tell me?"

"Yeah," Dream says lamely.

George thinks for a moment. "Step backwards, keep your hands up where I can see them."

The hostility in his voice makes Dream want to shrink to the floor, but he complies. George walks forward and picks up both of their wands, pocketing Dream's.

"Go sit down," George says as he motions towards the bed. "You're going to tell me everything."

"I'm sorry," Dream says again as he sits down, and George looks at him again, hurt, but doesn't respond.

"Who else is in this group?" George demands, and Dream exhales shakily.

"Black, Malfoy, Nott, all three of the Yaxlies," Dream starts. "And Rowle. Robert Rowle."

"Why did- I thought Tom was- he caught that monster in fifth year that was killing muggle-borns, how could he be a pureblood supremacist?" George wonders out loud.

Dream isn't sure if he's supposed to answer, doesn't really have an answer, so he shifts nervously in place instead. He watches the tendons in George's hands become more prominent as he grips his wand tighter.

"Why are *you* there?" George asks, the grief in his voice almost unbearable.

"I thought- I didn't know, I didn't understand," Dream stuttered out. "I didn't- I had a really wrong understanding of it all, and everything I knew was wrong. I didn't think it was going to be like this."

George just stares right through him.

"Tom was the first person who didn't think I was incompetent because I did poorly on my exams," Dream's voice falters, but he wills for it to keep going until he at least says his piece. "I thought he cared about me. And my parents were really big on the whole protecting the purity of magic thing, and he was too, in private, and I thought that it was right when it wasn't. I don't believe in pureblood supremacy, George. I promise."

He looks right at George, hoping the sincerity of his words carries over despite the fact he was being less than articulate right now. George doesn't respond, so he keeps going.

"He kept- I didn't even understand everything he wanted until recently. I've just been- I know it's not an excuse, but George, they lied to me so much. And I know it's still my fault because I shouldn't have been so easy to accept what they said, but I just- I didn't want to disappoint anybody."

"What changed?" George asks quietly, lowering his wand but still gripping it in his hand as he steps closer. "Okay, you were a pureblood supremacist, now you're not supposedly, but I'm assuming you're stuck here doing their bidding."

Dream nods.

"Why don't you just leave?" George asks, and Dream closes his eyes.

"I can't. They'll find me. I have to- I don't know what I have to do. I'm still figuring it out. And Tom knows I'm friends with you, so I was- I didn't want you to get involved."

George looks at Dream, and Dream looks at the floor.

"I didn't- George, I promise I didn't want it to be like this. I'm trying to find an out, and as soon as I can, I'll go to someone that can stop him. I don't- I won't let anyone get hurt, I promise."

"We left Sapnap with him," George says numbly.

"He won't do anything to him, he cares very much about having a good reputation in the eyes of Hogwarts, and Sapnap's a pureblood," Dream promises. "He hasn't hurt anyone yet. He's just- at first, he said his goal was to just make sure that undeserving muggle-borns don't find their way into Hogwarts, and then it became all muggle-borns as soon as he had a sizable group of us."

"What part of it did you believe?" George asks, and Dream becomes very interested in his nail beds.

"The all muggle-borns part," Dream admits quietly. "It's- I was just taught that. It's not an excuse, I'm not trying to make excuses, but it's what I've always known. I thought the muggle attacks- you know, they used to go on witch-hunts and stuff, they play up a lot of the numbers when they tell us about it. I've been- I read some more well-rounded books about them, and they just- a lot of it was war, but they- I was told they were attacks, one-sided. Things like that."

George kneels in front of him, and Dream watches him put his wand on the floor before putting a hand over Dream's knee.

"Why?"

They both ask it at the same time. George motions for Dream to elaborate first.

"Why are you being so calm about this?" Dream asks in a whisper, leaning forward to press his forehead to George's for a moment, like the physical contact could convey his regret.

"I trust you," George responds like it's the easiest thing in the world. "I just- I know this might sound crazy, but I just, something about you makes it so easy for me to trust you. Even though I know, logically, if any other person ended up doing this, I'd hex them across the room and kick and scream and find a way to tell somebody about this, and even though I technically shouldn't, I can't not trust you. There's something about you. I can't not believe you, can't even pretend I don't

believe you because I do. It's stupid and dumb and reckless and-"

Dream wants to kiss him. The thought is ridiculous and inappropriate for the moment by every means, but he wants to. Just to see what it was like. Instead, he practices self restraint.

"-I just believe you. I really, really, believe you, and I don't think you're a bad person. I think the fact you're questioning what you've been told your whole life is admirable. It must be hard," George says, putting a hand on Dream's shoulder sympathetically.

"Well, I'd argue that not believing in blatant discrimination is, perhaps the bare minimum," Dream says back, just to watch George crack a smile, "I appreciate it, and your understanding. It's more than I deserve. Thank you, George."

George smiles at him nervously.

"I trust you too," Dream says. "More than I can express."

"It's my turn to ask," George informs him, voice low like he's scared they're both going to get caught if someone hears, despite the privacy the room offers. "Why'd you change your mind? What happened that made you want to change your mind?"

"You," Dream says without hesitation. "That's easy. It was you. It's- there's a lot more at play here, now, obviously, but it was originally you. You were so nice to me when I was nothing but hostile towards you. You respected my opinions and thoughts enough to listen to me. Nobody understood me like you do. It fucked with everything I thought I knew."

It's the truth, and he hopes George can feel how much he means it. He had nothing to offer somebody like George in terms of friendship; no great connections, no strategic monetary gain. Despite this, he'd stuck around and listened to what Dream had to say.

"Well, I like listening to you talk," George admits. "You *are* intelligent, Dream. You just don't like exams, that doesn't-"

"You're doing it again," Dream laughs, pressing his forehead against George's one more time.

In relief, in the weight of having to omit the truth falling off his shoulders. George, who had unsuspectedly torn down all of his walls without even meaning to.

"We can't- what happens with Tom?" George asks, heat rising to his cheeks.

The difficult part.

"Tom can- Tom can read minds, I'm pretty confident he knows Legilimency," Dream says. "This is- he's probably going to check yours after this. If he knows you know, it might- it won't be ideal."

"He's versed in dark magic," George states.

Dream nods.

George feels his stomach drop. "So what do we do?"

"I could- I know Occlumency, have you had any luck with it?" Dream asks, and George looks at him with disbelief.

"No, I tried to learn in sixth year, but I'm really bad at it. How'd you learn it? It's so difficult."

This puts them in an unsavoury situation.

"I gotta wipe your memory," Dream says softly. "I can't- it's too risky, George. He's going to hurt you if he finds out."

"If you do, will all of this be gone forever?" George asks softly. "There has to- I can't- fuck, Dream. He'll hurt you too. I can't believe- I'd never even imagine Tom as a pureblood supremacist."

"I'll do some research on recovering memory," Dream says. "There isn't- technically, there isn't any way to do so, but there has to be a loophole. I'm going to see, and then- I don't know. I'll figure it out."

"Will you tell me all this again? When it's safe to?" George asks, and Dream nods.

"I will, I promise. I just- this situation is a bit of a mess, George."

George nods, and thinks for a moment. "What will I remember?"

"Just being out there with Sapnap, and then the details might blur a little. But according to what Tom told me, you'll have gotten back to the castle and ran into Tom, who took the ferns from you and gave them to Slughorn. Then both you and Sapnap went back to your rooms."

George pulls him close, and Dream puts his weight on him, bringing both of them down to the floor. Dream can't help but let out a sigh of relief, burying his face in the crook of George's shoulder, feeling the way they move when George laughs.

"It's going to be alright," George voices.

"It is," Dream reaffirms. "It has to be. There's still- there's so much more I wish I could tell you, but I suppose there's no point if you can't remember."

"When it's safe to, you can tell me everything," George says from beneath Dream.

Dream holds on a little tighter just because he can for a moment, the confirmation that George still believes in him despite the fact there's so much uncertainty in all of this enough to keep him going forever.

They finally stand, and George goes to put on his shoes. Dream does the same.

"You sure you don't want to curse me out, do anything?" Dream asks nervously. "I feel like you should be madder."

"It isn't- Dream. No matter how angry I get with you, I'm not going to hurt you," George says concernedly. "You're saying you aren't a pureblood supremacist. I believe you. We'll get you out of there."

Dream smiles at him tenderly, unable to stop his eyes from watering as he raises his wand to George's temple. "You ready?"

"Yeah," George says. "You can- you can knock me out if you'd like. Carry me back, in case anyone sees. You can just say I passed out in the hall while you were out for a walk."

"Smart," Dream says, exhaling to clear the butterflies from his stomach. "Okay, I'm doing it."

George hums in approval, one of his hands gripping Dream's bicep.

“Obliviate.”

George’s eyes roll back and he slumps in Dream’s grip. Dream puts a sleeping charm on him as he checks the time. He’s been gone for nearly two hours. Tom is probably wondering where he is.

He makes his way to Ravenclaw Towers, George in his arms. He sets George down on the couch of the common room, placing the book on the table on his lap. He presses his lips to George’s forehead, a promise that one day George will have the truth to keep forever and it will not put him in danger.

He looks otherworldly underneath the blue light of the lanterns.

When he makes his way to the basement and into the Slytherin Common Room, Tom is waiting for him.

“Did you take care of him?” Tom asks, and Dream nods. “What took so long?”

“He put up a bit of a fight once the curse wore off,” Dream says. “I had to stop him from freaking out before I did it, so I didn’t end up erasing more than I meant to. It worked out fine. He thinks he fell asleep in the common room.”

Tom nods and looks Dream in the eye.

Amelie. She’s got lovely eyes, the colour of the lake in the evenings when the moon is only half up.

“Goodnight Dream,” Tom says. “You’ve done well today.”

“Is Sapnap alright?” he asks.

Tom nods. “He won’t remember anything past collecting ferns and waking up in the common room. He’ll probably think he fell asleep after returning.”

Tom makes his way up the stairs towards his dormitory, skin translucent under the dim white lights above the staircase. Dream watches him go, before heading off towards his own.

George is safe. George trusts him. The rest would work out.

Chapter End Notes

would you believe me if i told you i had writers block for everything else but this. i'm just going to have to finish this first before i get anything else done i guess which is inconvenient but what can you do?

anyways yeah this chapter is double the length of a normal one and i was going to split it but twitter said to do it all in one go and i don't really want to split this into 2 i think it would disrupt the flow so yes! here is 4.1k

hope ur all good, loved reading your comments and as always love seeing your thoughts!! :) love u guys see you all in the next one !!!

Chapter 14

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Have you ever heard of Occlumency, George?” Dream asks him one day.

They’re sitting in the library, George working on his essays and Dream flipping through books on memory aimlessly. The room has been enchanted to appear more festive, in anticipation of the winter holidays. When George asks him why, Dream shrugs and says it’s been a new interest of his.

Neither George nor Sapnap remember anything from the night with the ferns. When Dream had asked him how detention went, George had simply said good and smiled at him. It stung, and he’s sure the second time he has to break the news to George will perhaps be easier, but at least George is safe.

George nods, looking up from his paper for a moment. “Yeah, I tried to learn it a while back, but I didn’t know any Legilimens that could help test it. It’s really difficult.”

“We should try to learn,” Dream attempts to sound nonchalant.

“Why?” George laughs, dipping his quill in an inkwell twice, before cursing when he spills ink onto his page. “You would think they’d invent a more efficient system than this for writing.”

“It’s tradition,” Dream defends, watching George go cross-eyed as he tries to magick some of the ink away.

“It’s stupid,” George responds.

“Fair,” Dream says, fiddling with his wand. “So, Occlumency?”

George sighs, placing a finger on the line of the textbook in front of him, before scribbling something else onto his page. “Maybe, Dream. It’s a bit useless of a skill.”

“It’s not useless!” Dream protests. “There are many situations in which it could be useful!”

“Okay, name one,” George says, finally dropping his quill and giving Dream his full attention.

“Someone tries to read your mind,” Dream says, rolling his eyes as he places his chin on the desk.

George laughs, sitting back in his chair as he runs his hands through his hair. Dream loses his breath for a moment. It truly isn’t fair that George looks so effortlessly good, *is* so effortlessly good.

“Tonight? Please, can we try?” Dream asks, looking up at George.

George looks at him for a moment with exasperation. “The ball is tomorrow, there’s stuff I’ve got to do.”

“Please?” Dream asks again, jutting out his bottom lip for a moment before bursting into laughter. “Don’t make me beg.”

George scoffs before smiling and shaking his head. “I’ll drop by the room around eleven. Not too

long, okay?"

Dream's heart soars. It's one step closer. Once George masters Occlumency, and he's bound to, Dream can tell him the truth again. As soon as he figures out how to retrieve obliterated memories.

Okay, so maybe it's harder teaching George Occlumency than originally anticipated. They've been trying for ages now, and George is getting visibly frustrated, urging Dream to drop it.

"Come on George, just one more try, I promise. I'm going easy on you! I learned the spell just this morning. What if there's a skilled Leglimens who tries to read your mind? What'll you do?" Dream asks as George plops himself onto the floor with a huff.

"I don't get why you're so hung up on this! I won't need—"

"Yes you will," Dream cuts him off. "What if they- What if people start coming for muggle-born students? How're you going to ward someone off if they try to read your mind to figure out what to do?"

George goes silent for a moment.

"I worry a lot, George," Dream continues. "I just- if you don't want to continue tonight, that's fine."

George's eyes, previously conveying an emotion that was sharp and borderline resentful now display something soft.

"I'm sorry," George says quietly.

Now Dream feels even worse. The last thing he needs, the last thing George deserves is to feel bad about this situation at all, because it isn't even his fault.

"Don't apologize, I'm sorry too," Dream says, sitting down on the floor across from him.

George inhales and shuts his eyes for a moment, before reopening them. He looks determined.

"Try it again," George says, getting to his feet. "Just one more time."

Dream tries to say that George shouldn't push himself if he's exhausted, especially since the ball is tomorrow and there is still so much he has to get done. George waves him off, and says that one more try won't hurt him.

"Thank you," Dream says, pulling George into his arms. "I know I am a lot to deal with at times, but your trust and confidence means everything to me."

This is the most physically distant way the both of them have ever spent time together, Dream thinks to himself. It's curious how they always seem to find themselves tangled up together regardless of what they're doing. There is promised comfort inside George's arms. Dream's chest tightens for reasons he can't understand.

"It's just a spell, Dream," George laughs, putting his forehead against Dream's collarbone for a moment before he pulls away. "Okay, I think it's- you can try now."

"Alright," Dream says. "I'm gonna- having to listen to the part of your mind that thought it was a

good idea to take Magical Theory should be a form of torture, but I'll get through it."

Dream raises his arm and points his wand at George's nose. "Leglimens."

The light that shoots through and hits George in the head is stronger than he anticipates, and he manages to see George stumbling backwards. Dream reaches out to ask if he's alright, but is blinded by white light before he can do so.

Dream watches the memory unfold from behind a silver veil. He recognizes both himself and George immediately.

George is curled up in Dream's lap as Dream rocks the two of them back and forth.

"The stars are so pretty tonight," George mumbles.

"We should go see them together sometime."

Dream hums out a noise of approval. "Yeah, maybe."

"No," George disagrees. "We should go, definitely."

Dream laughs. "Alright then, we'll go. Although, I have to say," he pauses, tracing a circle over George's ribs with his fingers.

"Stop," George hisses, going to slap his arm away. "Tickles."

"I think I'd just stare at you the whole time," Dream continues, and he means it.

George is silent and Dream sees him stiffen for a moment.

"Are you uncomfortable?" Dream asks, and George shakes his head no.

"Don't say things like that," George whispers.

Dream watches as the memory of him laughs and lies down on the floor so he has to look up at George.

"Why?" The memory version of Dream asks.

"Because you don't mean it," George affirms, and Dream feels his heart hurt for a moment.

"I do," Dream insists. "I really do."

George doesn't say anything.

Dream sees himself with his arm around Amelie while George stands with Tom and the rest of his peers. George wraps his arms around himself and looks at the floor, before the version of himself with Amelie unwraps his arm from around her and approaches George.

"George, hey," Dream says as he walks up to him.

"Hey," George responds, and Dream watches as he swallows dejectedly. "Just wanted to tell you I'm busy tonight, I can't help with homework."

“Oh,” Dream from George’s memory says. ““That’s alright, are we good for tomorrow?”

“I’ll let you know, I’m a little busy this week,” George rushes out, before walking in the other direction.

Dream watches as this memory of George takes deep breaths, fidgeting with his hands as he walks. Dream reaches out to touch him, but his hand travels right through.

Another blinding flash of light, and Dream feels like he’s going backwards on a broomstick travelling alarmingly fast. He feels the floor beneath him form again, and he stumbles forward.

He looks up at George who has managed to stabilize himself on a bookcase. He’s flushed bright red, forehead gleaming with sweat as he breathes in and out.

“You okay?” Dream asks, coughing. “Yeah,” George says, placing a hand on his forehead. “That was just- it was intense. I can’t even- you didn’t see anything weird, right? It was all just a flash for me.”

“Uh, yeah, just another one of you in lectures,” Dream lies, and he doesn’t know why. “But it was a lot more vivid. We should take a break, I think I’m wearing you out.”

They agree to call it a night, and Dream bids George farewell as he walks back to the Slytherin dormitories.

Dream didn’t know that him keeping George out of the loop as to him asking Amelie to the ball had hurt him so badly. He imagines he’d feel hurt too, if George had started seeing some guy and Dream found out through someone else. The idea of George with anyone sparks something ugly inside of himself.

He shakes it off. That’s a bigoted way to think - George can be with anyone he pleases, including another man. He’s got to work on making sure he doesn’t end up making George feel bad when that day inevitably comes. George, bringing home some boy he’s in love with to meet Dream. George, in love with someone.

It makes his stomach feel like jelly. He doesn’t like it.

He supposes that he’s just used to having all of George’s time, he muses as he tucks himself into bed. It will definitely be weird to adjust to. Dream supposes when he gets a girlfriend, George will probably feel similarly.

It’s the best friendship he’s ever had, he has the right to be a little territorial. He lets his mind wander back to George as he falls asleep, which happens more often than not these days.

George wants to see the stars with him.

George on his broomstick, the fabric of his Quidditch uniform stretching tighter around his torso as he contorts himself to dodge a bludger. George brushing the soft end of his quill over his brow bone as he rereads his notes during History of Magic. George in his arms, at peace, safe.

-

This is by far George’s least favourite ball he’s ever had the pleasure of throwing. Not because of the decorations, or the food, or the drinks. Those were all fantastic, actually. He had outdone himself. The Great Hall’s ceiling, floor and walls had been bewitched to a white colour. Winter pansies had been scattered across the room, and floating crystal charms hovered in the air above

the dance floor. It was beautiful.

The pity is that he's stuck here, watching Dream dance with Amelie.

They both look lovely tonight, but he's been preoccupied with staring at Dream. Sapnap comes to say hello to him.

"You've just been sitting here the whole time," he complains. "Just cause you don't have a lady on your arm doesn't mean you have to wallow in pity the whole time."

"It's not the lack of a lady, I assure you," George snorts, going to pour himself a Firewhisky.

"Can I get one too?" Sapnap asks, and George shakes his head no.

"You're a sixth year, they'll have my head for supplying it to you," George says sternly. "Go drink Butterbeer."

"That's no fun anymore," Sapnap complains. "I need something stronger, George."

"What you need is to get away from me," George says, craning his neck subtly to look at Dream over Sapnap's head.

Dream is dressed in forest green pants and a silk black shirt, with a matching black robe draped over his shoulders. His hair has been slicked back, with the exception of a stray curl that was stuck to his forehead. Dream catches him staring, and shoots him a smile.

George waves back, before flicking his eyes over to Sapnap.

"We should dance," Sapnap insists.

"Ask me nicely," George says back, downing the rest of his Firewhisky in one go.

Sapnap rolls his eyes before he drops to a dramatic curtsey. "Shall we dance, your highness?"

George snickers, glancing around to make sure no teachers were watching before pouring Firewhiskey into another cup. He hands it to Sapnap.

"You didn't get this from me, yeah?" he confirms, and Sapnap nods vigorously, downing all of it in one go.

"Get what from you?" Sapnap asks, and George can't fight his smile.

Dream has disappeared from his line of sight. George mingles with Charles, says hello to Davies and Wilbur, who are busy in a discussion about Quidditch yet again. He's manning the drinks table again with Charles when he feels someone tap his shoulder.

He turns to see Dream, who's clutching his leg and wincing in pain.

"I hit my leg, Mr. Ravenclaw Prefect," Dream says, wrapping an arm around George's shoulder for support. "Could you accompany me to the medical wing for support?"

George looks at him in disbelief. "You can't be serious."

"I am," Dream insists. "I even had to leave my date in the hands of another man."

George represses the violent jealous feeling inside of him to look for the forest green of Amelie's

dress. He spots it next to Alphard, who says something with raised eyebrows. She laughs, slapping his shoulder.

“Alright then,” George says, turning to Charles. “Do you mind letting Tom know where I am if he asks?” Charles puts his thumbs up and motions for George to get out of here. As soon as Dream and him are in the corridor, away from everyone else, Dream stands up straight and laughs.

“Did I get you?” he asks, eyes sparkling.

“Not in the slightest,” George tells him. “You’re a rubbish actor.”

Dream lets out a noise of displeasement before he grabs George’s hand. “I wanna show you something.”

Before George can protest, Dream is sprinting down the corridors, leaping past gaps in the moving staircases with reckless abandon. Finally, they arrive at a door, which Dream yanks open.

“Where are you taking me?” George asks, and Dream pulls them underneath a castle window so nobody can see them.

“You wanted to see the stars with me,” Dream says, stepping back to take a look at George.

Dream’s heart hammers around in his chest. He’s a little buzzed if he’s honest, but he doesn’t know what the staff expected when they set up a Butterbeer bar.

“Hm?” George asks, adjusting his navy blue robe over his shoulders.

Dream’s eyes rake over him shamelessly, and George feels self conscious for a moment.

They both stare up at the sky for a moment; pinholes in obsidian cloth, silver light shining through. Dream watches George breathe in and out as his eyes wander across the space.

“I knew it,” Dream blurts out.

George looks at him and tilts his head in confusion.

“I, uh,” Dream loses his ability to form words. “Wanna dance?”

“There’s no music,” George points out.

Dream’s eyes look for a way to fix that. He spots a dandelion growing in the lawn and picks it. He flicks his wand, transforming it into a guitar.

“Mollis musica,” Dream chants, and the guitar begins to strum itself.

It is nothing extraordinary, but it’s pretty enough. His hands shake as he places the guitar on the ground, urgency in his veins. He needs to dance with George before he loses his chance. George wraps an arm around Dream’s shoulder, as Dream places a hand on his waist. Dream hesitantly reaches for George’s other hand, and he’s absolutely certain George can feel how sweaty it is.

“I was saying earlier that I was right,” Dream continues. “Because you’re still the only thing I want to look at.”

It’s bolder than his other confessions, which have been nothing but vague promises for the future. It has grown clearer than ever, that the future held uncertainty, but George cared for him deeply. He cared for George deeply too.

George breathes in sharply. “Don’t say that Dream.”

“Why?” Dream challenges, as they sway in time to the music. “Why can’t I?”

“Because it makes me want to do something stupid,” George says as he steps forward towards him.

Dream leans in closer, hanging onto every movement, every noise George makes. His senses are in override, the only thought in his head is George, George, George.

“Like what?” Dream whispers.

George’s eyes flicker to Dream’s lips, before coming back to meet Dream’s eyes. George comes closer agonizingly slowly, like he’s giving Dream a chance to back out.

Dream’s eyes flutter shut as their lips meet.

Chapter End Notes

yoooooo hi sorry for potential future delays i am experiencing writers block but we will get through this. also wow a tentative chapter count!! thank you all for your super nice comments and i look forward to hearing your thoughts on this one :)

Chapter 15

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Kissing George is *right*. He doesn't know how else to describe it. It tastes like Firewhisky and feels like the truest thing he's ever done.

The first thing George does when he pulls away is apologize, which has got to be blasphemy.

"Sorry, sorry, I don't know what- I didn't-I know you like Amelie," he stutters, withdrawing his hands from Dream.

Dream stands there in shock for a moment, and George seems to interpret this as rejection.

"I'll go, I- I'm so sorry, Dream," George whispers as he wraps his arms around himself.

"No!" Dream yells, stepping forward and unfolding George's arms. "Don't- don't leave, I just-give me a second."

George swallows and nods, before looking at the ground, digging his shoe into the dirt.

Dream had never felt like that before in his life. He had never even considered it a possibility, ever, with the exception of recently. George has been the best at filling in every role in his life - his friend, his voice of reason, the only person who's ever properly cared for him. Now they've kissed.

He didn't know what it meant. He just knows he'd like to do it again.

"I'm not with her," Dream admits. "I just took her to the dance, but I handed her off when I saw you were free. I wanted to be with you tonight, but we can't really be open with anything in there."

George looks at Dream, eyes fixed on anywhere but his lips.

"Can I kiss you again?" Dream asks, and George goes bright red as he nods.

Dream smiles at him sheepishly before dipping down, planting a kiss on the left, then the right corner of George's mouth. He steals another one off the bridge of his nose, and another one off his chin.

"Dream," George whines. "Do it properly."

"Do what properly?" Dream asks, tilting his head to the side.

George's hands grip the collar of Dream's dress robes, and he tugs them downward. Dream obliges, dipping lower, and George's lips ghost over his for a moment before they meet for a brief second.

"Sorry," Dream whispers as he glances down at George. "I didn't- did you do something? I didn't quite catch it, if you could just-"

George cuts him off by kissing him again, then again, then again. They're laughing, and Dream buries his face in the crook of George's neck.

"I've wanted to do that for so long," George admits. "I just- I really like you, Dream."

George likes *him*.

George is a fucking catch if Dream has ever seen one; kindhearted and good, intelligent and gorgeous. Everything he touches turns into gold. George likes Dream, and of course he has it spelled out before Dream can even put a name to what he feels for him. Has Dream been blind?

“I’m happy you do,” Dream says, rocking the two of them back and forth as the guitar strums its final notes and tranfigures back into a dandelion, lying limply on the lawn.

“It’s like Cinderella,” George says absentmindedly.

“What’s that?” Dream asks, taking both of George’s hands into his own.

They’re so rough.

“It’s a muggle story,” George explains. “There’s a girl who lives with her stepmother and stepsisters, and they’re jealous of her because she’s so beautiful.”

Dream traces the heart line on George’s palm with his thumb.

“So they make her do all the housework while they live lavishly. One day, the royal palace throws a ball, and asks that every unwed woman in the land attend.”

Dream slots his fingers between George’s for a moment, before he takes the tips of George’s cold fingers between his palms to warm them up.

“Cinderella’s family locks her away to prevent her from going, but Cinderella’s fairy godmother shows up and fashions her a dress, glass slippers, and a carriage from a pumpkin. She sends her to the ball, but warns her to be home before midnight, or the spell will wear off.” George continues. “At the ball, she dances with the prince, but leaves before he gets her name. One of her glass slippers falls off as she rushes to get home in time, and the prince finds it. He vows to have every lady in the land try on the slipper, and to marry the one that it fits.”

“Do they find each other?” Dream asks, blowing hot air onto George’s fingers in an attempt to thaw them.

George shivers. “Yes, they do. Then he married her, and they lived happily ever after.”

“Good,” Dream says. “I want that for us, too.”

He hadn’t meant to say that.

George looks up at him with wide eyes. “What?”

Dream shakes his head in embarrassment. “I just- we can talk about this later. I’d just like to enjoy being with you for now, if that’s what you want too.”

Dream knows that this complicates things. How he’ll be able to hide his involvement with George from Tom. How he’s going to get both of them out of this. Not how he feels, though. He’s sure about that.

George nods and presses another kiss to Dream’s cheek.

“What’s that for?” Dream teases.

“Listening nicely,” George says with a grin, placing both of his cold hands on Dream’s face.

“I’ll listen more,” Dream promises with urgency, just to hear George laugh again.

“Professor Dumbledore?” Dream asks, knocking on his office door. “You wanted to see me, sir?”

Dumbledore’s office door creaks open, and Dream climbs up the staircase and steps inside to see Dumbledore sitting at his desk, writing something. He looks at Dream for a moment before glancing down at the pages in front of him.

“Have a seat, Dream,” Dumbledore says, motioning towards a chair.

Dream obliges, feeling anxious. “Am I in trouble, sir?”

“That depends,” Dumbledore says, and Dream clenches his jaw for a moment before relaxing.

He’s grateful for Dumbledore because of the work he does, and he’s extremely grateful he got George out of the hellish situation he was in. The teacher has never particularly cared for him though, which in a way makes sense. Dream doesn’t do the homework, and he scrapes by on the tests, which is odd considering he enjoys transfiguration, but he can’t be bothered to write papers on it.

“Your test scores have improved this year,” Dumbledore notes. “Well done.”

“Thank you sir,” Dream says, scratching his neck sheepishly. “I’ve uh- I’ve started studying with a friend, it’s been helpful.”

Dumbledore nods, before scribbling something down again. “Are you going home for the winter break, Dream?”

Dream swallows and nods. “Yeah- Yes, sir.”

He’s been dreading this. He doesn’t know how he’s going to go two weeks without seeing George, having to talk to his parents every day.

Dumbledore nods and drops his quill, folding his hands over his desk. “Where did you disappear off to from the ball yesterday? We couldn’t find you.”

Dream swallows hard. “I hurt my leg, sir, George took me to the hospital wing.”

Dumbledore nods as he stares into Dream’s eyes. Dream avoids eye contact.

“Well, that’s interesting, considering Madame Abbott hadn’t seen either of you.”

Ice water shoots through Dream’s veins in terror. He can’t let them find out about him and George; he doesn’t even know what they’d do to George. Would they expel him? Send him to prison? Would they hand him over to the muggle authorities to deal with?

What they did was foolish. Exceptionally foolish. Anyone could have seen them.

Dumbledore looks at him accusedly.

He knows. He knows that we snuck out.

“George dropped me off at the hospital wing, sir, I- this isn’t his fault,” he says, racking his brain desperately as he thinks of a lie. “He went to bed afterwards, he was very tired, and I snuck out to- I wanted to see the stars.”

Dumbledore raises his eyebrows for a moment, and he looks amused. “The stars?”

“Yeah,” Dream says, trying his best to appear embarrassed. “I really like them. They’re pretty.”

He avoids eye contact with Dumbledore like the plague.

“I’m glad you enjoyed the stars,” Dumbledore starts. “But you shouldn’t be out of the castle at that hour without express permission. Detention for three weeks, and twenty points from Slytherin.”

Dream’s heart skips a beat. He’s gotten off easy.

“Will the detention start before, or after the winter break sir?” Dream asks, and Dumbledore shakes his head no. “During. You will be at Hogwarts over your winter break, but you’re free to visit home for Christmas day.”

This was not a punishment by any means. Detention? He’ll just ask George to make sure he’s the one giving it. Doesn’t have to go home for the holidays? Another win. He’s glancing around the room, and his eyes fall upon a stone basin. Dumbledore sees him staring.

“You ever seen a pensieve?” Dumbledore asks, and Dream shakes his head no.

Dumbledore stands from his desk and walks over to it, motioning for Dream to come closer. Dream stands next to him, observing the grooves on the inside of it.

“It allows for the revisititation of memories,” Dumbledore says, and Dream’s heart skips a beat.

“Revisititation of memories? Just for- Is it just for the person whose memory it is?” Dream asks, and Dumbledore shakes his head no.

“No, anyone can view memories through the pensieve. Would you like me to show you how?” Dumbledore asks, and Dream nods with enthusiasm.

Pensieve. Pensieve, pensieve, pensieve.

“Aguamenti,” Dumbledore casts, and the basin - the pensieve - fills with water.

If he could figure out how to get one, as soon as George strengthens his grip on Occlumency, he can show him the truth through Dream’s eyes. Dream remembers the night in agonizing detail, making sure to remember everything that he possibly could.

Dumbledore puts the tip of his wand to his own head and closes his eyes. When he brings the wand away from himself, a silvery white string of magic follows. Dumbledore dips the magic into the basin and places a hand on Dream’s back, guiding his head into the water, and he experiences a sensation that feels somewhere between intense and delicate as the room goes bright.

He’s standing with Dumbledore in the air behind a veil, similar as to when he was in George’s mind. He watches himself walk into Dumbledore’s office.

“Professor Dumbledore?” Dream asks, knocking on his office door. “You wanted to see me, sir?”

Dream comes up from under the water, gasps for air and shakes his head in amazement. “Is this a British wizard thing? I’ve never seen these at home!”

He winces when he sees that he’s splashed the front of Professor Dumbledore’s robes with water.

“No need to be worried,” Dumbledore says, smiling at him. “These are more common in Europe, yes. The American government tends to regulate them very strictly.”

Dream nods, thinking to himself. “And these can’t be manipulated, yes? Because I was reading a book on memory, and it said that if you revisit a memory through Legilimency, the emotional attachment a person has to that memory will weaken it, making it easy to warp.”

“Yes, that is correct,” Dumbledore says. “Why the interest in memory, if I may ask, Dream?”

“Just a personal interest sir,” Dream waves off.

Dumbledore isn’t convinced, but Dream hardly cares. He practically skips out of Dumbledore’s office, when he runs into Tom in the Slytherin common room.

“What’s got you so giddy?” Tom asks.

Dream shakes his head as he feels something prod inside of his brain.

Amelie. Amelie at the ball-

“What happened with you and Parkinson at the ball?” Tom asks. “She spent most of the night with Black.”

“Oh, we didn’t end up clicking,” Dream rushes out. “Bummer.”

Which is technically the truth. They had a lovely time dancing, but Dream had been so preoccupied with trying to figure out how to sneak away to George that he didn’t really listen to what she had to say. Which is admittedly, not a nice thing to do, but she didn’t seem to mind sitting with Alphard, so all’s well that ends well, right?

“After we finish our time here at Hogwarts, I’ve decided to delay working for the ministry for a couple years, and apply for a teaching position here instead,” Tom tells him. “I find that the current political climate would be unfavourable for my goals.”

“You’ll be at Hogwarts,” Dream repeats. “What do the rest of us do?”

“Go about your goals,” Tom waves him off. “When I need you all, I will find you.”

-

George’s Occlumency has gotten perhaps, even better than Dream’s. No matter how aggressively Dream tries, he can’t see inside of George’s head anymore. It comes as a relief.

They celebrate by sitting by a fireplace, their cats toying with a ball of yard, illuminated by the glow of the flame. George is in his lap, levitating the end of the ball of wool away from them.

“You’re being so mean to them,” Dream complains halfheartedly as he wraps his arms around George’s waist, pulling him backwards.

“What’s your Patronus?” George asks, pressing the back of his head against Dream’s shoulder.

“I uh- I never learned how to cast one, actually,” Dream admits quietly.

George looks at him.

“I never did that well in Defence Against the Dark Arts,” Dream tells him. “And it’s super difficult, I don’t think most people can. Why, can you?”

“Your Occlumency stint inspired me,” George admits with a smile. “I wanted to learn something outside of what we did in class so I could teach you something too.”

“So you can cast one?” Dream asks in disbelief as George nods. “You’re unbelievable.”

He leans in for a kiss but George dodges him so it ends up on his cheek instead of his mouth.

“Not until you try casting one first,” George says with a grin.

Dream complains as George climbs off of him and shows him the motion.

“Think of your happiest memory when you cast it,” George reminds him.

Dream concentrates as hard as he can before he flicks his wand. “Expecto Patronum!”

Nothing happens.

“You’re doing it wrong,” George says, putting his hand over Dream’s and guiding his wand movement. “Thrust out your elbow at the end.”

“Can you keep helping me?” Dream asks, and George rolls his eyes but doesn’t remove his hand from Dream’s.

“Ready? Go,” George instructs.

“Expecto Patronum!”

Silver streaks erupt from the tip of his wand before fading. Patches takes an immediate interest and jumps up at where the formation occurred, pawing at the air.

“One more time,” George says, gripping Dream’s hand tighter.

Dream thinks of how George felt in his arms the first time they hung out together, how he felt safe for the first time in years. He indulges himself for a moment and wonders what it would be like to fall asleep, tangled together, every day for the rest of their lives.

“Expecto Patronum!”

George lets go of Dream’s hand as Dream yanks his wand backwards. Dream is both shocked and amazed to see a silver golden retriever form for a moment, before it fades away into nothing.

“George, I did it!”

He looks at George who’s smiling at him as his cat scales his back and hops onto his shoulder.

“What’d you think about?”

“You,” Dream says like it is the most obvious thing in the world as he steps closer, kissing George’s forehead, then his cheek, and then his mouth.

George wraps his arms around Dream’s shoulders as he pulls him closer, and Dream hears George’s cat hiss as she jumps to the floor. He makes a mental note to apologize to her later.

“I love you,” Dream whispers, feeling the most content and happy he’s ever been.

He doesn’t care who he is to anyone else. He doesn’t care if they think he’s lazy and uncommitted, because they’ve never taken the time to know him. George had somehow seen him, really seen who he was beneath all of the clutter he shows everyone else. George; his muse, his everything, the catalyst that allows Dream to become himself.

“I love you too,” George whispers, and Dream is complete. “I thought about you when I was learning to cast it.”

“Can I see yours?” Dream asks, cupping George’s cheek with his hand.

George nods, drawing his wand. “Expecto Patronum!”

A brilliant silver cat appears and takes a few steps before disintegrating.

“You blow my mind,” Dream says honestly.

They’re so close. They’re so close to George having the truth, from graduating and figuring out what to do, together. He’s still got to propose this idea to George, and he’d be lying if he said he wasn’t a little afraid of what was lying ahead.

He watches George pet Patches with one hand, and his cat with the other. He smiles up at Dream, the corners of his eyes crinkling as he tries to stop petting them, but both Patches and his cat paw at his hand violently in response.

“Mine learned that from yours, you know,” George tells him as he resumes petting them. “Thinks that she can pout or throw a fit and get whatever she wants.”

Dream lays down on the floor, putting his head on George’s lap. “But she’s right.”

“Yeah,” George sighs. “She is.”

They’ll get through this. Dream will do everything he can to ensure it.

Chapter End Notes

hello guys, as u can see i've said fuck it to my chapter length limits im just going wild
please don't expect consistency from me in terms of that going forward.

hope you all liked this chapter!! we're nearing the end which makes me so sad but i'm
so excited for u all to see the rest!!! as always love seeing your ideas and thoughts in
the comments.

thank u all once again, hope you're all well and see u in the next one :)

Chapter 16

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Dream didn't think serving detention during the winter break was going to be like this. He had spent the last evening doodling mindlessly and daydreaming about holding hands under the desk and trying to make George laugh. Their usual nights shifted to a different environment.

The last thing he had expected was to be sent out to the lakes in the cold of December with a bucket and some sixth year with way too much energy.

"What are you doing here?"

Sapnap turns to him and looks surprised. "Uh, hello."

"Hello," Dream says back, glancing at George. "I thought this was detention."

"It is," George responds, crossing his arm over his chest. "Both of you have detention."

"At the same time?" Dream asks, and it comes out whinier than he means for it to.

"Yes," George says, glancing between both Dream and Sapnap. "Please behave."

Dream knows Sapnap. He's a perfectly nice guy from the limited time they've spent together. That doesn't mean he isn't upset about not getting George all to himself.

They currently stand at the entrance to the castle, and George says he has to check something with Professor Slughorn, and that he'll be right back. He looks at Dream and Sapnap together one more time, before hurrying down the corridor and disappearing around the bend.

"We can take him," Sapnap tells Dream.

"What?"

Sapnap rolls his eyes. "George. If you can grab him by the shoulders, I can grab him by the legs and we can toss him into the lake and make a run for it. What d'you say?"

Dream draws his wand in record time and presses it to Sapnap's sternum.

"What the hell, man?" Sapnap yells in surprise, stepping backwards.

"Don't try anything," Dream hisses, straightening his shoulders and standing up taller in an attempt to look more intimidating. "I don't know what's tolerated in your home, but if you even *think* about talking about him like that again, I'll send you to the hospital wing."

Sapnap looks confused for a moment.

"I was *joking*," Sapnap says, shoving Dream backwards. "George is my *friend*, and I'm not one of those wizards, what's your problem?"

"You can never be too careful these days," Dream says offhandedly, but he pockets his wand.

"You're one to talk," Sapnap scoffs.

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

Sapnap crosses his arms over his chest. “You can’t judge me for what my family believes when yours believes the same shit.”

Sapnap is right about that, but it still stings.

“Sorry,” Dream mutters out finally. “I just worry about him.”

“He doesn’t need you to protect him,” Sapnap scoffs, rolling up his sleeves. “George can hold his own.”

“I know,” Dream says defensively.

A moment passes in silence.

“I’m sorry,” Dream says again, with more sincerity. “It was a dumb conclusion to jump to. He’s just had a few close calls, and I just get- y’know? I’m working on it.”

Sapnap shrugs. “No worries, I get it. I made the same assumption about you, but George says you’re not like that and I believe him.”

Dream practically beams at this new piece of information. He hears footsteps approaching, and George returns with a fistful of gillyweed.

“You guys have to eat some,” George announces, opening up Dream’s fist and dropping a pinch in his palm, while doing the same to Sapnap. “Incase you fall into the lake and forget how to swim.”

They start towards The Great Lake. They talk about Quidditch and the upcoming NEWTs. Sapnap reveals he wants to be Auror, while George admits he doesn’t have the slightest idea.

“Dumbledore offered me an apprenticeship as a Herbology Assistant, but I’m unsure,” George says.

Dream admits that he doesn’t have any sense of direction as to what he wants to do. “George,” Dream whispers when they arrive at the lake. “Let’s jump into the water.”

George looks at him like he’s crazy. “No!”

“C’mon,” Dream pleads, looking to Sapnap for some backup.

Sapnap puts his hands up and steps back. “I can’t swim, and I’m not chancing it.”

Dream looks to George again sadly, who sighs. “If we finish collecting everything we need within the next hour, I’ll swim with you, but only for a moment.”

This new motivation allows Dream to work faster, and they finish up far earlier than they originally anticipated.

“You promised,” Dream reminds George, taking his hand.

Sapnap has stepped further away from the edge of the water. “I’ll watch our things, you two go ahead.”

George squeezes Dream’s hand. “I can’t swim, Dream.”

“Nothing will happen with the gillyweed,” Dream promises. “You’ll become amphibian-like once you hit the water.”

This new information doesn’t affect George’s skepticism, but he doesn’t let go of Dream’s hand. They run towards the edge of the water and Dream pulls George down with him.

They hit the surface with a splash.

George’s eyes are squeezed shut, and Dream taps his shoulder under the water. George opens his eyes, and Dream motions for him to breathe. He’s tense for a moment, but upon realizing that the water won’t enter his lungs, his eyes light up in excitement.

Dream swims forward and places his hands on George’s waist, leaning forward to kiss him. George laughs soundlessly against him, pulling him in again by the collar. When Dream pulls away and sees him, eyes glittering and looking at him with such confidence, he knows he has to tell him the whole truth very soon.

Not soon. *Tomorrow*.

When they pull away from each other and swim towards the surface, they don’t spot Sapnap. Dream panics for a moment, until Sapnap appears from underneath the water beside them.

“There you are, Merlin,” George breathes in relief, placing a hand over his chest. “I thought you got taken by a beast.”

“Yeah well, I thought now was as good of a time as any to try and learn to swim.”

Sapnap is flushed beet red, and the three of them make their way back towards the castle. They’re halfway there when Dream’s stomach sinks to his feet and he realizes.

“Sapnap,” Dream says softly, already dreading the answer. “Did you see us underwater? We couldn’t see you.”

George’s expression morphs into one of panic.

Sapnap exhales loudly. “Yeah, I saw you.”

The awkward silence is a confirmation. They take a few more steps forward in silence before George speaks.

“Please don’t tell,” George pleads, coming to a stop.

Dream slings an arm around him on instinct, pulling him close in an attempt to comfort him. He looks at Sapnap, who looks between the two of them.

This wasn’t supposed to happen. Dream had just so narrowly escaped Dumbledore learning about the two of them. Sapnap looks conflicted as he looks at Dream, then George.

“So are you both...” he motions between them. “You’re together.”

Dream looks to George for confirmation, and George nods.

“Okay,” Sapnap says, exhaling. “Honestly, it isn’t as much of a surprise as much as it is mortifying. But you two should be- no, you need to be a lot more careful.”

George breathes a sigh of relief. “Thank you.”

Sapnap laughs, and then Dream laughs, and George laughs too.

“Also, not around me please. I’m going to have to Obliviate myself back at the castle because I did not need to see that,” Sapnap retches.

Dream goes bright red.

“Well, you did say you weren’t coming,” George defends. “We thought we had time.”

“Shameless,” Sapnap tsks. “The both of you.”

“Yeah,” Dream admits.

“That’s why you didn’t want me here, you bastard,” Sapnap says, pointing at Dream. “Animals. Control yourselves.”

Dream goes an even darker shade of red.

“That’s not very progressive,” George scowls, but he’s smiling.

“It’s not disgusting because you’re queer, it’s disgusting because you’re both gross,” Sapnap retorts, and neither of them have anything to say to that.

George looks at him and smiles sheepishly. Dream presses their foreheads together.

Sapnap groans.

—

“I’ve been lying to you,” George says the next time the two of them are alone.

Dream raises an eyebrow. “What do you mean?”

George exhales like he’s nervous. “I’ve been avoiding talking to you about something because I’m afraid of how you’ll react.”

Dream feels his chest tighten. *That makes two of us.*

“I need to tell you something too,” Dream admits.

The Pensieve he’s bought from Knockturn Alley sits at the very back of the room. It was ridiculously expensive, and the engravings on the side appear far more sinister than the ones in Dumbledore’s office. When Dream tested it out, his vision was a little fogger than what it was the other time he used it, but it serves its purpose just fine.

“Can I go first?” George asks nervously. “I just- I need to tell you. It’s eating me alive.”

“Of course,” Dream says. “Is everything alright?”

George nods. Dream holds open his arms as an invitation, but George shakes his head no.

"I used to have to touch you while I told you anything about me," George says wistfully. "Now I don't."

The snakes in the pit of Dream's stomach twist in sick anticipation.

"I think I was afraid that you'd leave me, or see me differently," George continues. "I don't feel that way at all anymore. I'm just scared."

They dissipate as quickly as they appeared. George trusts him. That's all the two of them need.

"Can I hold you anyways?" Dream asks, and George smiles as he places a hand on top of his.

"My family's very religious, and the church we attend can get intense," George begins. "Sometimes it would get too much for me, all the yelling in church, so they'd send me off to live with my grandparents."

Dream nods, following along.

"I was at my grandparent's for the beginning of summer, and they- they're not as active in the church, but they've got other things they do," George says quietly.

The air becomes cold.

"They're witch-hunters," George whispers.

Dream feels something violent inside of him spring to life. George lived with witch-hunters. His hands immediately cup George's cheeks.

"Darling," Dream whispers.

George laughs.

"You've never called me darling before," George notes.

Dream feels tears stinging his eyes, threatening to fall, but he forces them away. "Would you like me to stop?"

George shakes his head no.

"They're not very good," George notes. "Just sat there and talked about the glory days of witch-hunting for most of the summer, until they caught me on my broomstick."

Dream feels sick.

"That's why they did the whole—" George motions towards his back. "That. They had my parents come in, and then my mother and father pretended that it was all the first time they'd heard anything about my magic. And I had already been caught with the boy earlier in the summer, but I lied my way out of that one. I told them we were praying," George says, gasping for breath. "The real reason was all of it. This is the full story, I'm sorry for omitting so much of it."

It's sickening.

He pulls George closer.

"I was so scared, Dream," George says, shaking. "I was scared you'd hate me."

“I could never,” Dream promises because it’s true.

“I know you said your family, and you, used to have more pureblood-centric views, and I thought if I told you I’d prove you right,” George continues. “Because it’s kind of true. If muggles ever did find out about magic, they’d have your heads.”

The intrusive voice at the back of his head wonders what would have happened if George had confessed this part of the story the first night they met, when Dream still held his parent’s views. It tries to tell him that he wouldn’t have cared, that he would’ve let George be and he’d still have that scar stretched across his back.

Dream disagrees with that.

He would’ve reacted differently, but it could’ve been his least favourite person in the world and it wouldn’t have mattered. It would’ve still been wrong. He thinks he would’ve still hated it.

It doesn’t matter what could’ve happened. What has already happened is done, and he’s here right now. Hypotheticals were quieter than the truth.

“That’s not your fault,” Dream tells him.

“I thought that way before I found out I was a wizard,” George whispers, closing his eyes. “I was a vocal member of my church, y’know. I continued to pretend to be during the summers. I’m the thing you hate.”

“You were eleven years old,” Dream reminds him. “You were a kid. You’re still a kid, George.”

George shrugs.

“Please don’t blame yourself,” Dream repeats. “It’s not your fault. How could you have known?”

George shrugs again.

“I’m not upset anymore, about any of it happening. The whole ritual,” George admits. “In a way, I’m glad it did happen.”

“Don’t say that,” Dream whispers, tightening his grip. “You didn’t deserve it.”

“I’d suffer it a thousand times if it meant it led to me having you,” George says. “Is that a horrible thing to say?”

Dream’s entire being aches.

“Yes,” Dream confirms. “In another life we don’t have to suffer to get to each other.”

They think about what that means. Dream plants a kiss on both of George’s temples. They sit there and enjoy each other. A final moment of peace before everything changes.

“What did you want to tell me?” George asks.

This is it.

“I need to preface this with a few things,” Dream says as his hands shake. “I just want you to know George, that you’re free to leave if this information upsets you, and it won’t change any of my perspectives.”

George looks at him concernedly. "Is everything alright?"

Dream can't lie this time. "No. I did something bad. It was stupid, and misinformed."

"That's alright," George says. "We can fix it."

Dream shakes his head no. "We might be in danger, George."

George looks concerned now.

"Do you remember the night you and Sapnap were out for detention?"

"Which one?" George asks.

"The time you were collecting plants, or something," Dream says.

George nods.

"Something happened that night," Dream continues, the feeling of dread becoming stronger. "And I had to Obliviate you. I think I explained most of the situation in the memory, but if there's any other questions you have, you can ask me. I'll tell you everything."

"I'm confused," George says. "What do you mean by memory?"

Dream summons the Pensieve and sets it down in front of the two of them.

"A Pensieve," George notes.

Dream nods. "You'll be able to view the night objectively."

George looks at him apprehensively as he fills the basin with water.

"I love you, George," Dream chokes out, unable to stop himself from crying. "I love you so much, I'm so sorry about this."

George wipes the tears from his cheeks and kisses him. Dream wonders if it's the last one.

It's worth it, he reminds himself. George deserves the truth, and if he hates him, Dream will dedicate the rest of his life to making sure nothing bad happens to him anyways.

He's practicing the pulling of memories so many times, that it comes easily when he taps the tip of his wand against the side of his head.

He casts it across the water.

"I love you," George reminds him.

"I love you," Dream says back.

He omits the *too* because it doesn't matter if George won't feel the same way afterwards. Dream still will.

George takes Dream's hand in his as he dunks his head underwater.

Chapter End Notes

hello guys hope you liked the chapter! thank you for all the very nice comments, and i look forward to seeing your thoughts on this one! thank you very much for reading as always :)

Chapter 17

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

An ornate mahogany table sits in the centre of a cold room. Only three out of the ten seats are filled. George recognizes the little boy with unruly blonde hair holding up a piece of bread.

“Mom,” this version of Dream says. “Mom, look, it’s the size of my hand!”

The only woman at the table looks at him and smiles. “That’s very nice dear. Do you know where your brother is?”

Dream shakes his head no. The man at the table appears irritated, and George watches as the woman - Dream’s mother - puts a hand on his shoulder in an attempt to comfort him.

The door to the room swings open, and an older boy stumbles in. His hands are in fists.

“Where have you been?”

When the man speaks, Dream places the bread onto the dish and folds his hands in his lap.

“I was out,” the boy says, running a hand through chestnut brown hair.

He sits down on the chair next to Dream and grins at him.

“With who?” the man asks, tapping the end of his fork against the wood of the table.

The sound it makes is unnerving. George wants to leave.

The other boy mumbles something under his breath.

“We can just move darling, it’ll be alright,” the woman says, looking between the boy and the man.

Dream is working at tearing the bread into little pieces.

“No,” the man - Dream’s father? - says. “Apparently, the one thing we ask of you is impossible.”

“I didn’t do anything,” the boy mutters.

“Why did the muggle neighbour’s girl wave at you?” Dream’s father asks, face turning red.

The boy shrugs.

“And you,” the man turns his attention to Dream, who’s cheeks have been stuffed full with bread like a chipmunk’s. “You let him? You didn’t stop your brother?”

“He’s seven years old, Perseus,” Dream’s mother pleads. “They’re children, they don’t even understand.”

“We told them no,” Dream’s dad insists.

The silence is loud. It rings in George’s ears. Dream’s father looks at Dream.

“Leave us.”

Dream looks at his brother who has tears welling up in his eyes, reaching out to take his hand.

“Go away,” Dream’s brother says.

Hurt flashes across the small version of Dream. The scene becomes murky before he joins this Dream in staring at a wooden door, a piece of bread still clutched tightly in his little hand.

Muffled screaming. Dream stares at the door blankly.

“Darling,” Dream’s mother says, crouching down and placing a lace-gloved hand on each of Dream’s shoulders. “Please don’t be upset. We have to do it because we love him.”

A stabbing pain attacks George’s head.

Dream is a little older here. He’s teary eyed as he looks at his mother.

“Your brother could get himself hurt, do you want that?” she asks, and Dream shakes his head no.

“The muggles are dangerous, they’ll kill you if they find out how special you are,” she reasons, reaching for a handkerchief and wiping a tear from his eye.

“He screams so much, dad’s hurting him,” Dream says hoarsely. “We can’t- can’t we do something else?”

“It hurts us more than it hurts him,” Dream’s mother purses her lips. “You’ll understand when you’re older.”

They are on the Hogwarts Express. Dream looks the way he does now, but the skin underneath his eyes is noticeably darker. Tom Riddle sits across from him, a Prefect’s badge pinned to his robes.

“I understand you, y’know,” Tom says. “You’re smarter than the rest of them. They just can’t see it.”

Dream looks at Tom warily.

“I know they’ve hurt you,” Tom says softly. “I know what they did to your mother and father.”

Dream’s chest rises and falls. Although he’s upset he didn’t get to him earlier, George is glad that somewhere along the line, Dream found somebody that understood. Someone to help him work through the false anti-muggle-born propaganda. He desperately tries to ignore the ringing in his ears as he continues to watch.

Tom came from a muggle orphanage. He, out of everyone besides George, probably understood how hard it is to overcome obstacles such as these.

“Look at the monster they made out of your parents, Dream,” Tom says quietly, placing a hand on his shoulder. “They’re trying to make the same monster out of you.”

"I won't let them," Dream says firmly, determined. "I won't let any- no mud-blood is going to ruin my family again."

George's heart twists painfully. He waits for Tom to correct him.

"They won't," Tom assures him. "Join me, and it'll never happen again. Your family will be provided for, there will be no more evil left to ruin what is rightfully yours."

What?

Dream looks at Tom. He nods.

George comes up for air, gasping. He turns to Dream, who looks terrified.

"Dream," George starts, coughing. "Dream, what was- huh?"

"Did you see the whole thing?" Dream asks, and George shakes his head no.

He wonders if he should bring up the other ones, but he decides against it for now.

"Up until the train with Tom, but he- I don't understand," George says, wrapping his arms around himself, shivering.

"There's one more," Dream insists. "You have to watch that one. It's the most important."

George thinks for a second, and then shakes his head no. "I don't want to."

Dream looks at George in shock. "That's the- George, that's the one that I wiped from your memory, that's the reason I got the Pensieve. So you could see it."

Still, George shakes his head no. He looks confused and hurt, the same way he did when the shock wore off those weeks ago.

"George, please," Dream tries. "I can explain it all again if you like after, but you *have* to watch that one."

"I don't want to," George repeats. "My head is spinning, it's too painful. Just tell me what happened, I trust you."

"You don't want me to," Dream says. "You won't- it doesn't even sound real when I explain it. You won't believe me."

"I believe you," George insists. "I always believe you."

Dream wants to grab George and shake him by the shoulders and yell at him for having such blind faith in him all the time.

"You shouldn't," Dream says, voice cracking. "I just- you have to watch it."

"If I don't believe you, I'll watch it," George promises. "But you need to tell me. Yourself. Say it out loud, Dream."

Dream stares at him blankly.

"We're well past the point of not trusting each other, and I'm going to believe you," George says, his voice surprisingly steady before he spells himself dry. "So please. Just tell me. I'll believe you. I will. I don't need you to jump through hoops to prove it to me."

Dream stares at him for a moment, heart beating wildly in his chest. George is right.

"Every time I go to trust you, you act like I shouldn't," George says gently, placing a cold hand on Dream's cheek. "I trust you. I wish you could trust yourself."

Dream freezes, mind running wild as George removes his hand and guides the both of them to the couch.

Leave it to George to figure him out before he's figured himself out. There's something to be said about that, he supposes. He doesn't trust himself, because he knows the decisions he's made. The only right one so far has been George.

Dream closes his eyes and inhales, mustering up all the courage he can find.

"Tom is running a pureblood supremacy group, and I'm in it," Dream blurts out.

As expected, silence. George studies his facial expression.

"I don't believe in it anymore, I don't- if you check the Pensieve, and the memory, I explain, and you can-"

George holds up a hand for Dream to stop talking. He immediately does.

"Tell me the whole story, don't worry about having me believe it. That's my job," George assures him.

So Dream does. He begins at the forest, at the part he's sure George can remember, and then he walks them through the rest of it. He tells him all about the new books he's read, the lies he uncovered. He tells him that regardless of whether George decides to leave him or not, he's not going back to that.

Usually he can read how George is feeling, but right now there is nothing. He waits. He waits for George to ask for a further explanation, for a chance to see the Pensieve. He waits for George to insist that Dream is lying.

Instead, George just pulls him into his arms.

"I don't- George," Dream stutters. "I don't think you heard me correctly. I didn't- I was-"

George holds onto him tighter, like he's afraid Dream will fall into pieces if he doesn't.

"I did something bad," Dream insists. "I did something that could put you, put so many people in danger. You should be upset."

George still says nothing, but pulls away to kiss the apples of both of Dream's cheeks. The action moves Dream to tears.

"You're being too nice to me," Dream says brokenly. "You should be mad. You should hate me- and I didn't show you the first few to get you to feel bad for me, I just wanted to show you that I wouldn't have chosen that for myself. I just thought it was right because it's all I knew before you."

George kisses the corners of his eyes, then pulls Dream's head to his chest. Dream listens to the steady beating inside of his chest.

"You're allowed to make mistakes, y'know," George says quietly. "You did what anyone else would've done."

"You're not mad?" Dream asks in a whisper. "I did- I tried an Unforgivable Curse on you."

"Which failed."

"I Obliviated your memory."

"Which I asked for."

"I could've killed you if I messed it up."

"You didn't."

Dream sobs into George's shoulder, apologizes a million times for all the things he shouldn't have done, promises to be better, promises George doesn't have to stay for him to follow through on that. And still, because he is selfish, because he is human, he begs George for forgiveness, he begs George to stay in the same breath.

"I'm not leaving you, if that's what's worrying you," George states matter of factly. "I'm never leaving you, Dream."

The words feel lovely from where he's lying on George's chest, but still he weeps.

"We're the same, y'know," George says quietly. "We just got stuck on different sides of it all."

George's hands rub soothing circles on his back. George forgives him. George forgives him. George forgives him.

"I love you," George says softly.

"I love you too," Dream responds, closing his eyes.

It's over. The worst of it is over, he hopes, even though he knows that it's not true.

"Can I ask you something, Dream?"

Dream nods.

"What happened with your brother?"

George feels him stiffen. "You don't have to tell me if you don't want to."

"He was always running around, making friends with anybody he could," Dream starts. "When we were kids, I mean. He didn't care about what mom, or dad had to say about it."

George nods, waiting for him to continue.

"My parents hated it, thought it was so embarrassing. Esteemed pureblood name, and their son spent his free time running around with the muggles in the neighbourhood."

He pauses.

“I should’ve helped him.”

“You were a kid,” George says gently. “How were you supposed to know?”

Dream shrugs.

“They sent him off to some reform institute one summer, he came back different. Just never was the same. Stopped doing things for fun, just worked. Became the golden child. Got a job. He barely visits anymore.”

George looks at him with sympathy.

“I was really resentful for a bit,” Dream admits ashamedly. “Wished that he didn’t stop being so- I don’t even know. I don’t know what they did. We don’t even keep in touch. Sometimes he’ll come home, make small talk with my dad. Take me out for Quidditch, but that’s it.”

Dream swallows hard.

“I hope he’s happier now.”

George doesn’t know what to say, so he just listens.

“I want to tell him I’m sorry,” Dream whispers. “I should have done something. Told someone that could have done something. But nothing happened. I just made sure I didn’t do what he did, like a coward.”

“You didn’t *know* it was wrong,” George assures him.

“George, how many times can I use that as an excuse?” Dream laughs bitterly.

“It’s not an excuse. An excuse would be if ten years down the line, you killed someone and then tried to use whatever happened to you as a ticket to get out of it,” George says, tilting Dream’s chin to look him in the eye. “You know what’s brave, Dream?”

Dream’s eyes flicker to the floor.

“Abandoning everything you know. Taking apart everything you thought was real, even though it would be easy for you to not. I might’ve freaked out, the first time I found out, but-”

“You were scared of me,” Dream mutters. “I don’t want you to be scared of me, ever. I know that it’s not about me, and you had to-”

“You’re allowed to be sad,” George reminds him.

“Can you watch the rest of the memory for me? Some other time? Please?” Dream asks. “It’s just- I don’t-”

“I’ll watch it,” George promises. “Not today, but another time.”

Dream cries into George’s shoulder for a little longer, letting himself be taken care of. George whispers sweet nothings into his ear, like he’s somebody that deserves to be taken care of.

“I never would have suspected Tom,” George thinks aloud. “I always thought he was good.”

“I don’t know how I’m going to leave,” Dream whispers. “He said he’d find me. I don’t know if- I don’t know what I’m supposed to do.”

"I'll help you," George promises. "I'll protect you."

Dream laughs. "I'm supposed to protect you."

"I love you dearly," George starts, leaning forward to kiss Dream's forehead. "But you are *very* bad at Defence Against the Dark Arts."

Dream looks up at George with mock offence.

"We were learning about something in class, actually," George starts. "It could help, but I need a few days to sleep on it."

Dream nods. "We can't tell anyone about this, and Tom is a Leglimens, so make sure to- yeah."

"I also don't think it's a good idea for the two of us to be seen together out in public," George says quietly. "Or we might draw suspicion to ourselves, and we don't want that from Tom."

Dream wants to protest, but he knows George is right. Still, he's going to be upset about it.

"Thank you, George," Dream says.

"For what?" George asks with a laugh.

"Everything."

George rolls his eyes fondly, like Dream is thanking him for butterscotch candy instead of potentially rewiring every plan for the future he has.

"Thank you too," George says.

"For what?"

"Everything," George smiles cheekily.

He doesn't know what, or how, or why he's the one who gets to have George like this. Alone, unguarded, always forgiving. It blows his mind, over, and over, and over.

"I don't believe you," Dream says, moving to sit up. "You should convince me."

"How do I do that?" George asks, like he doesn't know the answer, like he isn't leaning forward.

Dream closes the distance between them. Over, and over, and over.

Chapter End Notes

author's note: i know technically no-maj is more common in the usa but please take into consideration that it is a stupid term and i will not be using it because i reject the fact that it's canon. if that compromises the canon-ness of this story overall, so be it. this is a hill i will die on.

hope you're all well! dream and george in this make me feel sick a little bit actually. the next two chapters will be longer, so they may take a bit longer than i usually take to get out. thank you all once again for the super nice comments, appreciated so much. would love to know ur thoughts as always, and see you all in the next one :)

Chapter 18

Chapter Notes

a warning that this chapter goes considerably more into violent detail than the previous ones

The days become lonelier.

Dream knows that it's the price he has to pay for his actions. Being seen in public with George under unexplainable circumstances has potentially dire consequences, but it aches all the same. He doesn't know how he will survive the next few months.

He feels hollower. Sleep doesn't come as easy anymore. The idea of being unconscious around people he know report to Riddle creates too much dread to properly relax.

He pretends to study for the NEWTs as he contemplates his options for the future. He's resorted to passing out in the library in between classes when he's sure that he's in plain sight in case Malfoy or Black decide they want to try something.

The only time he can really rest is when he's in George's arms.

George knows. He skips Quidditch practices to watch over Dream as he sleeps.

"You're tired," he'll say, kissing the apples of Dream's cheeks when he tries to protest. "Get some rest. I'll be here."

He can't. Every time he closes his eyes he's plagued with unsavoury visions. George screaming, his brother screaming, the world burning around him while he's forced to watch. He doesn't tell George this because he doesn't want him to worry.

Dream doesn't remind George that it's his fault they're in this mess anymore. Not because he doesn't believe it, but because it upsets George deeply.

There are nights where he is unsure why George bothers to love him at all.

Are we borrowing time? Dream wants to ask him as he climbs into George's arms. Instead, he lays there as George rubs circles into his scalp in an attempt to persuade him to sleep. George will update him on the Quidditch cup, on the drama the sixth year students have gotten themselves involved in, on his progress studying for the NEWTs.

Sometimes, Dream wonders why George doesn't resent him. Dream would resent himself.

It makes George cry when he tries to bring it up. George had a future for himself. He's intelligent, well-spoken, handsome, good in school, polite, respected, kind, everything, everything, everything. When George tells Dream he's rejected Dumbledore's offer of coming back as a Herbology apprentice next year, Dream wants to destroy himself for getting in George's way.

George promises Dream that it didn't matter because it isn't even what he wanted but Dream knows he's lying to spare his feelings. Hogwarts is what George wanted. A safe place is all George

has ever wanted, and Dream has desecrated its ability to feel like home.

He wishes George hated him sometimes. He wishes he had said no when George asked to sit with him in his compartment, wishes he'd stood up and moved away when he had sat next to him in the library, wishes they'd stayed out of each other's way. He wishes he'd had half the mind to question what he was taught before taking Riddle's offer, wishes he had a quarter of the courage his brother did to stand up to his parents, wishes things were different.

He wishes and wishes and wishes. Everything stays the same.

Dream wakes up in the same body the next day and trudges down to breakfast. He throws himself into his schoolwork, lets the bile burn his throat as he listens to the people he surrounds himself with speak.

He's selfish, because he doesn't wish any of those things at the same time. He'd feel this fear forever if it meant forever was with George.

He watches George laugh along with Davies and Wilbur from a distance as he stirs his oatmeal.

George deserved to be happy forever. After everything he had endured at the hands of other people, after every evil in every universe had tried to ruin him, he was still so good.

He does his best to become who needs to be in order to be good enough for George; he refines his spell work, reads magical theory he can't understand and forces himself to memorize things that could be potentially useful.

He's failed so many things. Failed his OWLs, failed his brother, failed himself.

He won't fail George.

-

Sapnap comes to see him after a few days when Dream is sitting at a table in the Great Hall.

"Hello," he says, broomstick in his right hand, Quidditch cloak slung over his left shoulder. "Long time no see."

"Hello," Dream says, putting his hand up in greeting. "How are you?"

Sapnap glances to the left, then to the right. "I'm alright. I'm sorry to hear what happened between George and you."

Dream is confused momentarily before he remembers. George told Sapnap that the two of them were no longer together.

"It's alright," he says as sincerely as he can. "Wasn't- was a bad idea, really."

Sapnap takes the seat in front of him. "Are you doing okay?"

Dream could laugh. No.

The times are getting worse and worse. Headmaster Dippet trips over himself in an attempt to mask the severity of the war going on outside the castle doors. He's a fool for even trying, Dream thinks to himself bitterly. The Daily Prophet is available for a knut at Hogsmeade. It takes half a brain cell to see that there is a problem.

People talk. Closing the castle doors has just allowed the unpleasantness to fester. Dream hears it in the common rooms; talk gets more and more vile, and there's only so much longer it can be ignored. He knows Sapnap isn't asking about the war. He's asking about how Dream feels to not have George. And Dream, selfishly, has George.

He doesn't get to have George though, not really. He gets to hold George and take care of him, to be George's behind closed doors. Dream hates it. He wants to wear George on his arm, spin him around and kiss him in the hall, watch other people stare with jealousy. He wants to hold hands in the carriages, dance together at balls. Instead, they settle for a room nobody knows about.

His heart aches. George deserves better.

"It's going alright, busy with the NEWTs preparation is all," he waves off, gesturing towards his book.

He couldn't care less about the NEWTs. It doesn't even matter if he fails, it isn't like there's an abundance of viable options for his career, with the very few subjects he's even taking.

"I know you and him were close," Sapnap offers sympathetically. "Now you don't even- you don't even look at each other. Is everything okay?"

No. It's not.

He doesn't want to tell Sapnap another lie, but it looks like he's got to get used to lying.

"Uh yeah, we had a falling out," Dream continues. "But it's alright. Don't really wanna talk about him."

Someone sets their books down next to Dream, and he glances up to see Abraxas.

"Alright there, Dream?" Abraxas asks before giving Sapnap a once over. "Hello, didn't know you two knew each other."

"Not really," Dream says before Sapnap even has the opportunity to speak. "He's just from America too."

Abraxas nods, looking between the two of them. "Okay."

Ever since the incident in the woods, Tom has been noticeably more relaxed with Dream. Dream supposes that he's given him a reason to be. Everybody else has jumped onto his back in response, desperate to know what it is that he did that granted him this extra freedom. Every move he makes feels like it's under watchful eyes, ready to report him the moment he steps out of line.

Sapnap looks at Dream for a very long moment, but ultimately doesn't say anything to protest.

"If you need anything, let me know," he says softly before he walks away.

Something about the sympathy makes Dream's chest hurt. Maybe, when Riddle is defeated, Dream can go find him and thank him. For keeping George and him a secret. For being so accepting despite not knowing the circumstance in the slightest.

Today, he watches Sapnap walk away.

George closes his eyes for a moment as he lays in Dream's lap. Neither of them particularly enjoy going outside anymore. George refuses to even look at him in the castle courtyards, afraid that someone will catch them and figure it out. Room for error grows smaller. The ceiling has been enchanted to mimic the way a real sky looks. Stars twinkle above them, and Dream watches as the faux moonlight dances on George's skin.

"What are you thinking about?" Dream asks as softly as he can, carding his hand through George's hair.

In another life, he doesn't have to ask because he already knows. In this one, there is too much going on to be certain, a million reasons to drown in their own minds, unsure of which drop in the ocean causes the flood.

"The war," George pronounces into the silence of the room.

"There is no war yet," Dream reminds him. "Grindelwald will be defeated, and Tom—"

"It's coming, Dream," George says with resignation. "But I don't want to talk about it, if that's alright."

Dreams swallows hard and nods. "Alright."

"Been doing a lot of research on my own," George tells him. "A lot of transfiguration and charms magic. Dumbledore has me working on a Portkey building project."

George reaches for Dream's hand. He absentmindedly traces a line around his wrist with one finger.

"That's fantastic, George," Dream tells him sincerely. "Have you given any thought? To where you're going after the year ends?"

"I have," George admits. "I think somewhere closer to central Europe. Wanna steer clear of all the—the y'know. War."

Dream nods. "Cool."

"You'll join me, right?" George asks him nervously. "If you—I mean, I planned that you would. I've got a few places I'm looking at. Once you're finished with—I know you can't tell me, but I want to help."

There's Dream's boy. So good to him. Offering to dive headfirst into the snake's nest on his behalf, always ready to pull him out of trouble.

"If there's anything you can need from me," George reminds him. "Please don't try and do everything yourself if you don't have to."

“I know,” Dream tells him, hunching over to press a kiss to his forehead. “Thank you.”

George smiles as he closes his eyes.

—

“Happy Valentine’s day,” George tells him brightly as he hands him a bag.

Guilt dances in the pit of Dream’s stomach. He’s been too preoccupied to plan anything. He takes the bag from George’s hands and tries to smile at him without feeling like the worst person to walk the planet.

“I forgot,” he says hoarsely. “I’m so sorry. I’ll make it up to you later.”

“You’re always planning our things, and you’ve been so busy,” George waves off. “It isn’t that big of a deal, really, I just saw it and thought of you.”

They sit down together. Dream carefully takes apart the silver and black decorative tissue to reveal a small oak box.

“Open it,” George tells him eagerly, watching him with excited eyes.

Dream struggles with the latch but eventually pries it open to reveal a solid silver bracelet.

“You shouldn’t have,” Dream says, delicately taking it out. “Thank you.”

“Can I put it on you?” George asks, placing a hand on his wrist.

Dream hands it to him and holds out his arm. George pinches the clasp and hunches over, carefully fastening it.

“You should wear jewelry more often,” George tells him, wrapping his fingers around Dream’s wrist, over the bracelet. “It looks nice on you.”

“Does it?” Dream asks, holding out his arms for George.

George rolls his eyes as he puts his head on Dream’s chest. “You are so one-track minded.”

“What’s that mean?” Dream asks as he cards his fingers through George’s hair with one hand and reaches for his palm with the other one.

“It means you’re always only thinking about one thing,” George tells him. “It’s just a thing people say.”

Dream tilts his head so he can look at George. Everything inside of him hurts.

He’s torn this beautiful boy from the only home he knows. He’s stolen him and dragged him into the heart of a war he shouldn’t have to fight in. “What am I always thinking about?”

George flushes pink as he closes his eyes.

“Tell me what I think about,” Dream asks again, softer this time.

His hands find their way to the small of George’s back. His thumbs slot into the dip of George’s waist, while the rest of his fingers line themselves delicately along the side of his ribcage.

“Me,” George says, voice breaking as he tries to press himself further into Dream’s chest.

A pause. Dream holds his breath. “Yes. I hope you never forget it.”

“You’re shaking,” George laughs, holding onto Dream’s shoulders to stabilize him. “Do I make you nervous?”

“Yeah,” Dream breathes out without missing a beat. “You do.”

George rolls his eyes fondly but he kisses Dream on the forehead. Lotus flowers and gardenias bloom in Dream’s chest as he feels George smile against the peak of his brow.

“I love you, Dream,” George murmurs, the words rolling off his tongue so naturally. “We might not- do you know the story of Valentine’s day?”

“I don’t,” Dream softly whispers back, afraid that if he raises his voice then everything they have worked so hard to guard will shatter around them. “Tell it to me.”

George tells him that there are different versions, but he likes to believe his favourite. He talks about a priest named Valentine, who during an era of Christian persecution, would hold wedding ceremonies for Christians in secret.

He was killed for it.

Dream swallows hard at the ending.

“I would- what do you think?” George stammers out. “I don’t know how I- I’m not particularly fond of- you know, just because- I think the principle of it is touching.”

“It is,” Dream agrees. “People die for love.”

“Do you think that it’s romantic?” George asks, pulling away a little to watch Dream’s face.

For a moment, Dream wonders what would happen if he and George were ever caught with each other, like this. His throat tightens up in discomfort at the idea of their time together being cut short. He watches the way the light cuts into George’s cheekbone and accentuates the lines that form next to his lips when he smiles.

“Yes,” Dream states.

I would die for you.

“Don’t say that,” George says shakily. “I know what you’re thinking about.”

What could Dream possibly be thinking about? The sand in the bottom half of the hour glass. The invisible rope that binds him to a duty that doesn’t exist. The threat of being found that hangs over both of their heads at every moment in time.

“I would,” Dream repeats.

“I would too,” George says. “But we won’t have to. We won’t.”

If George is saying it with conviction, Dream believes it without hesitation.

“We won’t,” Dream parrots. “We’ll get to live together for the rest of our lives.”

He takes George’s hand in his, brushes his thumb over his ring finger.

“Dream,” George shakily pronounces. “I want to marry you.”

The words send a wildfire tearing through Dream’s veins. He lets the heat swallow him, something foreign and passionate coursing through him.

“I want to marry you too,” Dream says, kissing underneath George’s eyes, then the tip of his nose, then his cupid’s bow. “But not now. Not because I’m not ready, but- y’know, it’s always raining. I’d want to marry you in the summertime, I think. Away from everybody else, away from the war. Just the two of us.”

George hums a noise of approval, smiling at him amusedly. “Have you thought about this?”

Dream laughs. “I told you already, I think about you all the time.”

Dream feels George’s heart beat harder in his chest. He pulls him closer, hoping that George can feel his beating harder too. Like the blood in his veins can’t possibly hold all of what he wants to say, what he wants to do. Like everything in him wants to tear itself into pieces, materialize into something physical, to show George exactly how he loves him.

George looks at him, eyes like the moon, lips trembling like he’s struggling to find the words as well.

I know, Dream thinks. I know what you feel.

“What if it rains forever?” George asks.

He’s not talking about the seasons anymore. Dream kisses his temple tenderly.

“I’ll accio the sun for you, George,” Dream tells him seriously.

They laugh. If it were up to Dream, he’d marry George the next morning. He’d drag the two of them out to the alley behind Honeydukes, and they’d exchange toffee wrapper rings in secret until they could afford to replace them with real ones.

“I’d accio the sun for you too,” George tells him, nose pressed into the crook of Dream’s shoulder.

George exhales heavily and it tickles Dream’s collar. It feels warmer already.

—

Dream thinks that if he and George were to get a house together, it would be quaint and made of bricks. They’d dig up the land underneath it so that they could have a staircase that led from their bedroom on the top floor, to a kitchen and a living room on the second. Dream wouldn’t mind being his assistant, actually. If George continued doing Herbology research, somehow, under a

different name-

“Dream,” Tom Riddle calls his name, snaps him out of his reverie. “Please stay back after the meeting.”

The other people in the room glare at him for a moment, upset that his lack of attention is going unpunished again. As they file out, Alphard Black kicking his chair on his way, Dream sits up straighter.

“I have a proposal for you, Dream,” Riddle starts. “And I want to reward your loyalty.”

Dream wants to propose to George. In a field full of poppies and golden light beaming down on the two of them.

“What would that be, my lord?” Dream asks, forcing himself to push those thoughts aside.

Riddle looks at him for a moment, and then purses his lips. “I have successfully gotten a position at Borgin and Burkes. I’m waiting to collect something from there. In late August, I will have gotten what I need, and I will have to take a trip. You are to come with me.”

“Yes, my lord,” Dream says, feeling panic settle into his stomach.

He wants to be with George by September. He doesn’t know how he’s supposed to juggle all this.

“In return,” Riddle starts. “You may ask for something.”

Dream almost laughs. He wants George’s safety. He wants his own freedom. The two things he cannot ask for.

“I am a man of my word,” Riddle begins.

Without warning, he grabs Dream by the forearm and yanks him to his feet while he draws his wand.

“My lord?” Dream asks confusedly.

His heart beats anxiously in his chest. There’s no way he knows.

“An unbreakable vow,” Riddle says softly. “If you fulfill the task I need you to fulfill, whatever you want will be yours.”

Riddle waves his wand again, and Dream tries to wrap his head around what is happening. Golden thread spins in the air around them, engulfing the two of them.

“Ask for what you want, Dream,” Riddle says forcefully. “If either of us should lie, we face death.”

Riddle is terrified of death. Dream thinks he’s lost it. The whites of his eyes flash red as he waved his wand roughly. He’s getting messier, less precise.

The spell wraps around them, closer and closer to binding Dream to Riddle’s will. He speaks only when he knows that it is impossible to uncast it.

“I want- I want George to be safe forever,” he spits out.

The golden thread disappears. Riddle looks at him in shock and stumbles backwards. Dream stands

in place, horrified the spell didn't go through, horrified he's outed the both of them, doomed them forever-

"Very well," Riddle finally sneers. "I didn't know you and him were still- Dream, you poor soul."

"I don't," Dream defends himself.

The knot in his stomach tightens in anxiety. The vow has been made. George is safe. George can't be hurt. Riddle can't touch him without risking death.

Riddle is afraid of death.

"I'm still dedicated to the cause, my lord," Dream lies through his teeth with ease. "But he- I do not want anything to happen to him."

Riddle observes him for a very long time. Dream keeps his mental barriers up. Tom Riddle thought he could outsmart him, bind him against his will to take part in some mission he has no idea about.

It doesn't matter. Riddle could kill him right now, for all he cares. George is safe. George is safe.

He's succeeded.

"Very well," Riddle repeats. "I understand."

Before Dream can say anything, he's walked out of the room.

Suspiciously easy.

But Dream knows this magic- was brought up around it. There is no way to cheat an unbreakable vow. Riddle is bound to keep George safe, exactly the way Dream means it. And Dream means for him to stay away from him.

The adrenaline finally begins to wear off. He breathes out a sigh of relief. George is safe. All he has to do now is get to him.

CHAPTER 7.2: INFERI

Dead bodies enchanted to do the bidding of the dark wizard who creates them. Contrary to popular belief in muggle media, there is no way to actually raise the dead and bring them back to life. Necromancy does not allow for communication with dead beings, but allows for a dark wizard to manipulate dead beings to do their bidding. It is possible to access the soul of a dead wizard should they leave behind the means for people to do so, but it is impossible to join the physical body with the spirit again.

Similar to zombies, Inferi are dead bodies that are capable of committing violence against living humans. Often raised in armies, wizards pulled into their clutches, when killed, will join their ranks.

When a wizard is killed by an Inferi, they become a reanimated corpse, at the mercy of the command of the wizard who casted the first spell.

- A Beginner's Guide to Understanding The Dark Arts, Bagilda Borgue

-

"So this is it?" George wonders aloud. "Our last day here together."

The room of requirement has been transformed into a library again. The Hogwarts Express will arrive tomorrow. Their time here is finished.

"How d'you feel about that?" Dream asks.

George looks at the ceiling thoughtfully. "Do you remember when we first met? Here?"

Dream nods. "Yes."

"I was thinking about it last night," George informs him. "I think- do you remember when I told you that you shouldn't have been able to come inside when I was? Because you have to know the reason someone else was in there to access it while it's being used."

"Yes, I do," Dream recalls.

Things are so different now. He feels so different now. Older, warier, less sure of himself, and the happiest he's ever been at the same time.

"I wished for some place to escape," George says softly. "And it let you in. That's gotta mean something, right?"

Dream's heart swells with pride. "Yeah, it does."

"I was a little disappointed when your patronus was a dog," George admits. "I wanted it to be a cat like mine. Because that means that you're soulmates, or something. But, if you think about it, this is better, because-"

"George," Dream says with a fond smile. "We don't need some spell to tell us we're meant for each other. I already know that."

George bites back a smile as he reaches out and grabs the collar of Dream's shirt, pulling them together into a chaste kiss.

"Always such a smooth talker," George tells him.

"I'm- I have good news for you, George," Dream announces with a smile. "I think that we'll be able to be together sooner than I think."

“How soon?” George asks, brushing the hair out of Dream’s eyes.

“Early September,” Dream tells him with a grin. “I’ve gotta- I’m going to go somewhere, and I have to do something. But once it’s over- and nobody’s going to get hurt, I swear- I think we’re free.”

George grins, eyes lighting up in delight. “Really?”

Dream nods eagerly. “And we can even- I think we can even try to send a hint to tip somebody off, here at Hogwarts about Riddle- speed things along in getting him out of the way.”

“That’s fantastic,” George tells him excitedly. “We can- We’ll figure that out later, but we can- Dream!”

George wraps his arms around him in excitement and Dream laughs.

“I’ll miss you in the time I can’t see you,” George murmurs. “I’ll get a job. Build us a little house. We can figure everything else out later.”

“We can,” Dream agrees. “But I’ve got to ask you one more time.”

George looks at him expectantly.

“If you want nothing to do with me-” George opens his mouth to protest but Dream holds up a hand to stop him, “-George, I’m serious. This plan doesn’t mean you have to be stuck with me if you don’t want to. You’ll still be safe, I-”

George grabs Dream’s shoulders and shakes him twice angrily. “Shut up.”

“I just want you to know-”

“Shut up, Dream,” George says furiously. “You’ll have to pry me off of you.”

He tightens his grip for good measure.

“You don’t even know,” George says shakily. “I can’t even- Merlin, Dream. I would choose being with you over everything. Having to watch you go off and- I don’t even know what you’re involved in, but I know you’ll get out of it. And then I’m never letting you out of my sight.”

Dream laughs as George pulls him closer. “That’s good to hear.”

“Good,” George tells him matter of factly.

“Good,” Dream says back, the most content he’s been in months.

THE DAILY PROPHET

AUGUST 1945

BREAKING NEWS: THE DEFEAT OF GRINDELWALD by ELPHIAS DOGE

Rising tensions between muggles and wizards have been brewing for ages now.

With witch hunting activities in muggle extremist groups increasing steadily over the past twenty seven years in Great Britain has come a new age of self defense for wizards. Unfortunately, the intolerance of few had been all the confirmation that some sinister folk needed to revert back to practicing the primal dark arts.

Gellert Grindelwald, who has been responsible for many large attacks on muggles and muggle borns, under the guise of wizard-kind taking control over the world “for the greater good” has finally been captured. He awaits trial and faces life in Nurmengard.

Previously expelled from Durmstrang for the practice of dark arts and torture techniques on fellow students, it came as no surprise to individuals familiar with him that Grindelwald had made an attempt at world domination.

He faces the defeat at the hand of his rival, and old friend, Albus Dumbledore, in what witnesses describe as one of the most “horrifically spectacular duels of all time.”

Discouraging “blood supremacy” discussion is, at times like this, more important than ever. It is crucial that the notion of blood purity acting as a benchmark for how deserving a witch or wizard is to practice magic must die alongside this cruel movement.

Hopefully, the defeat of one of the most evil faces in history serves as a catalyst for a future where magic and non-magic folk can live together, in peace.

—

This was it. This is all he has to do before George is safe. He can leave all of this behind after this is over. This one favour. Then they’re both free.

He walks into the back room of Borgin and Burkes, where Tom Riddle is waiting for him.

“There are Inferi that lurk in the waters of the place we are going,” Riddle reminds him. “A special project of mine that I’m still working on, for security. This locket has to be kept safe.”

Dream nods to show his understanding. “Yes, my lord.”

Riddle takes Dream’s hand in his and informs him to close his eyes. He apparates the two of them with a pop.

Dream opens his eyes. The two of them stand on a ledge overlooking the sea. The ledge leads to a cave, and Riddle wordlessly motions for Dream to follow him.

Dream glances back at the violent waters lapping against the base of the stone they stand on. The waves churn themselves dangerously high for a moment, and Dream shudders as the mist dampens the front of his sweater.

“Dream,” Riddle calls sharply. “Come.”

Dream steps into the darkness of the cavern.

He feels his heart thrum erratically in his chest when he finally comes to terms with the reality of the situation. Riddle glances at him, skin milky and unnaturally translucent in the darkness of the cave. His pupils are blown large, obsidian as he watches Dream with an almost fascination, like he's drinking in the sight of him. Dream stares right back and wonders how he could have ever seen a place for himself in all of this.

The inside of the cave is dark, illuminated only by the light on the tip of Riddle's wand. There is another ledge above shallow water in the cave, leading to a stone island in the center of it. A column of some sort sits in the middle of the stone island.

Dream watches the water lap against the narrow pathway towards the column, which appears to be more of a pedestal the more he squints. Dream looks at the murky water on the floor of the cave and an uneasy feeling settles into the pit of his stomach.

Riddle wordlessly unfastens the locket around his neck and presses it into Dream's palm.

"Come," Riddle says, motioning towards the path in the cave. "Place the locket there."

"There?" Dream repeats.

Riddle clenches his jaw impatiently. "Yes."

"But- my lord, you said that there are Inferi in the waters," Dream stammers out.

"Yes," Riddle states matter of factly.

Dream presses his thumb to the cool metal of the silver bracelet on his right hand. "If I do that, I'll die."

Riddle looks at him with indifference now. "You may. If the spell has worked."

An uncomfortable buzzing settles into his ears as panic begins to coarse through Dream's veins. He hadn't expected for this to come so early.

"My lord," Dream breathes out. "I- I'm not- I can still be of use to you."

"Do you care about preserving the purity of magic, Dream?" Riddle asks him, disregarding his previous statement as he cocks his head to the side.

No. Dream doesn't care in the slightest, because it's not real.

"Yes," he breathes out, adrenaline coursing through his veins with an intensity that makes him quiver.

"Sacrifices must be made," Riddle continues. "For the greater good."

"I- my lord, please," Dream begs. "I don't want- I'm not ready to die."

Riddle looks at him again, eyes becoming snakelike as his nostrils flare with anger. "This is what I've called you to do."

"But-"

Riddle draws his wand and points it at him. "You're going to die anyways, Dream. You somehow

had the foolish idea that you could outsmart me to keep some Mudblood safe on your own terms.”

Riddle scoffs, and Dream winces as he kicks a stone on the floor towards the wall of the cave. The sound echoes and magnifies the feeling of doom in his belly.

“You could have had what you wanted and still stayed true to what was right. Pity.”

It shouldn’t hurt, but it does. A reminder that Riddle hadn’t actually seen any hidden potential in him, but thought he was easy enough of a target to mould into a pawn for his personal gain.

There is a moment where neither of them speak. The waves crash against the base of the cave and terror knocks around on the inside of Dream’s chest.

“Your life has gone to waste. You can still choose whether you want your death to mean something or not,” Riddle continues, stepping closer to press the tip of his wand into Dream’s sternum.

He’s right. Riddle is right. Even if he dies here today, he may as well sacrifice himself for something worth dying for. He thinks of George for a moment, finally free to live without the world breathing down his back.

“You’ve been most faithful until now,” Riddle continues. “A shame. Such a shame.”

“Then why are you killing me?” Dream coughs out in a whisper.

Something sinister wraps itself over his shoulders and squeezes around his chest. Oxygen feels sparse. The smell of sea foam and algae intensifies. It feels as though the walls of the cave are falling in on themselves.

“Dream,” Riddle says with finality. “Choose. Place the locket over there-“ he flicks his wand towards the pedestal. “Or I’ll make you watch someone else do it before I kill you both.”

The finality in his tone finally triggers a panicked reaction inside of Dream.

“Wait,” Dream breathes out, holding up both his hands. “Tom, just- I just want a moment, please. I know, I just need one second, I’ll do it-”

Everything is going too fast, too quickly.

Riddle sighs and flicks his wrist. “Crucio.”

Dream drops to his knees on uneven limestone and screams. For a moment he can’t believe the noise is coming from his throat. It feels as though hot needles are piercing through his skin, weaving themselves in and out of the pores of his skin. Everything inside of him trembles in pain for a moment before it’s all gone.

“I just- please, just one moment,” Dream asks, closing his eyes. “Please. I’ll do it, please.”

He glances upwards. Lord Voldemort stands above him, looking at him impatiently. He pushes himself to his feet, wincing as he feels the ripped skin of his knees brush against the fabric of his pants.

This might be it. He wobbles towards the ledge and begins to walk across it. The moment his shoe touches the path, Inferi begin to crawl out from the shadows of the water.

For a moment, Dream is too terrified to move. He stares at the skeletons adorning rotting flesh staggering towards him, before a voice breaks him out of his trance.

“Run to the pedestal, get the locket there,” Riddle shouts.

Dream rips his leg from the grip of one of the Inferi, bolting towards the pedestal like his own life depends on it. Dead limbs grab at him but he dodges with his entire body. One of the Inferi manages to sink its teeth into his shoulder and he hisses before shoving it off. Two more hold onto his forearms but he drags them forward with him. He slams the fist with the locket onto the platform before stumbling backwards.

“Well done,” Riddle says stoically. “I’ll miss you, Dream.”

His supposed last words to him are laced with insincerity. The familiar pop of apparition rings inside of the cave. At least he’s been granted privacy in the moment he’s been left for death.

Dream says nothing as he’s dragged down to the floor, head slamming into the ground. He feels warm liquid pool up underneath his head and his vision blurs around the edges. The Inferi begin to drag him towards the water and an involuntary sob escapes his throat.

Finally granted mental solitary, Dream thinks of George. The corners of his eyes crinkling as he smiles, his forehead pressed to the skin of Dream’s collarbone, the way his hands tremble when it gets cold. He can almost see him watching the scene unfold, eyebrows cinched and lips pressed together in concentration. He thinks of kissing the furrow of his brow and watching the tension dissolve as he looks up at Dream with an unconditional adoration that nothing else in this cruel world had dared to give him.

George gives Dream his love like he’ll never run out of it.

I’ll never run out of it either, George. He imagines himself saying. For you, I would do anything.

The Inferi dig their claws deeper into flesh. Dream lets them drag him backwards before he hauls his head towards his arm.

He hopes what he has done is enough. He presses his lips to the silver band on his wrist. He closes his eyes.

Chapter 19

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The rain is loud against the roof of the house. Anticipation clots in the pit of his stomach as he waits. The ticking of the clock feels violent, almost, as if the movement of the arms was a bladed gear turning in his chest.

He wonders who he'll have to answer to. There isn't much good he had done in the eyes of anyone. He expected to wake up surrounded by- well, he's not sure. He hadn't given much thought to it.

Dream hadn't, however, anticipated purgatory to have a wooden ceiling. He shivers and goes to sit up, but pain shoots through his shoulders and he's forced to lay back down.

He's lying on some sort of cot.

The room is colder than he anticipates. If he turns his head, he can see a chair in the corner of the room with three empty bottles resting on the seat, and a jacket slung over the top rail.

Funny. He hadn't anticipated God to be a coat person. Is that who you meet when you die?

His vision is still blurry, and a ringing echoes in his ears. He wants to close his eyes, go back to sleep.

A door he hadn't even noticed slams open. He squints, trying to make out the silhouette when-
“You’re awake!”

Dream winces at the volume and goes to move an arm over his ears but hands on his shoulders stop him.

“Sorry, sorry. Don’t move, I haven’t healed your shoulder yet,” the voice says, quieter this time.

If he didn’t know any better, he’d think that the person speaking to him was George. He opens his mouth to let them know, but he only manages to let out a cough. George was waiting for him, out there, somewhere. Maybe he thinks Dream has abandoned him.

He gives up on opening his eyes.

A hand moves to behind his head, props him upwards, and presses the rim of a ceramic glass to his mouth.

“Water,” the voice offers in explanation.

Dream screws his eyes shut even tighter, but loosens his jaw to drink. It’s not like anything can happen to him now. What was he going to do, die twice? The glass is slowly withdrawn after a moment.

“You remind me of George,” he hears himself say. “Can I say goodbye to him? I just- I haven’t seen or spoken to him in almost two months, and he’s- he’s waiting for me. I don’t want him to think I just left him.”

Closing his eyes does nothing for the dizziness. It feels like the top of his head is made of stone

and the rest of his body is made from rubber.

He hears the clink of a glass as it's set on the floor. He feels his head lowered back onto what feels like a pillow.

"Can you open your eyes for me?"

Dream feels frustration bubble up in his chest. "I don't- maybe I wasn't the best person, but I just think that George deserves an explanation."

A cold hand gently brushes the hair stuck to his forehead back. He feels the person- the entity lean forward and press what feels like their lips to the space between his eyebrows.

"George would do that," Dream explains.

He'd assume that someone who was meant to guide him through the process of being dead would be all knowing. For a messenger between life and death, this individual seemed very unprofessional.

"Dream," the voice says softly. "It's me. It's George."

Saltwater rises inside of Dream's lungs. The words feel like being punched back into existence, back into the cave, back into the claws of the Inferi.

"Don't," he firmly states. "I don't want to have some fake conversation with a fake George before I die."

"You're not dying," the voice says, but it sounds echoey this time. "Can you open your eyes?"

He can't do that. If whatever this is has made itself look like George, like *his* George, he might lose his mind. He goes to reach out a hand but groans in pain. It feels like someone has cut out a piece of his shoulder.

"Don't move your hands," the voice says. "Is there- do you want something? I can get it for you."

It's too much. Sounds too much like George, feels too peaceful to be real. He can remember how he died now; teeth in his back, all alone on the floor of a cave.

"Dream," the voice says softly.

A scream rips itself from Dream's throat. He doesn't want to be stuck here anymore, doesn't want to think about what any of this has to do with anything. He doesn't care if this is some test, some sort of sick joke on behalf of the universe, a hallucination planted by Tom to torture him before he finally loses consciousness forever. He wants to be done. He wants to see George. All of it muddles together into a mess.

"I want to be done with it," Dream growls. "I want- just let me see George, let me tell- there's got to be something I can-"

"Open your eyes," the voice says, firmer this time.

Dream feels thumbs on his eyelids, prying them open. He tries to move away, but the person holds him down in place. His eyes focus.

George.

It's the first time he's seen him in two months outside of his dreams. The fight drains out of him all at once. George looms over him, a concerned look on his face. There's stubble lining the bottom half of his face, hair pushed back.

"I'm sorry," George says again, calmly. "I put something on your wounds. It tends to make people paranoid when ingested. Can you just relax for a moment, please?"

Dream's head still hurts, and he's confused, but he nods. George stands up from where he was kneeling on the floor next to Dream and walks towards the door.

"Don't go," Dream begs. "Don't—"

"I'm just going to get something to help, I'll be right back, promise," George says.

Dream hears his footsteps disappear down the hallway hurriedly. He's not quite sure where he is, nothing is making any sense. He'll ask George what's going on.

Panic stabs at him. If George is here with him, does that mean he's dead too?

George returns, holding a basket full of medical supplies in one hand, and a bowl with a spoon in the other.

"I had to cut away your shirt to get to the wound," George explains. "I'm going to just- I'm not too good at this healing thing, fuck."

"I'll tell you what to do," Dream tells him. "But- how'd you die?"

George looks taken aback. "I haven't died."

"Yes you have," Dream tells him. "We're both dead."

George looks at Dream for a moment, before wrapping his arms around him and pulling him into a sitting position. Dream groans when he goes to pull away, tries to grab at the hem of his shirt to keep him there, but fails.

"Let me fix this," George promises. "Then we can talk, okay?"

Dream lets George unwrap the cloth from his arms, shoulders, torso, hissing as he feels the tender skin make contact with the air.

"When I found you, I thought- it was such a mess," George says, voice quivering. "I thought you were- I didn't let myself think about it."

"How'd you find me?" Dream asks curiously. "From- do dead people have to find each other?"

"Dream," George says softly. "You aren't dead."

Dream blinks twice. That can't be right.

"But we- I thought- Inferi—"

George's hand lands on his wrist, where the silver band sits. "It's a portkey."

Dream's brain short circuits. "What?"

"The bracelet," George gently pronounces. "The one I gave you for Valentine's day. It's a portkey. I had it so- I took it from you the day you told me you had to go on a mission, and I set the

coordinates to me. Incase you-”

“It’s- what?”

George exhales, putting both his hands on Dream’s cheeks, bringing their foreheads together for a brief touch. “It’s a portkey.”

“It’s a portkey,” Dream repeats. “To you.”

“To me,” George says with a nod. “It can- it’s based on a new muggle medical instrument, it measures your blood pressure. If it dropped too low, then it would catalyse a reaction that would set off a timer to a portkey that would bring you to me.”

Dream blinks. “You *made* it? For me?”

George nods, smiling softly. “You were- I thought I lost you. It wasn’t originally a portkey, but then you said you were going on a mission, and I got scared. I’d set it up while you’d sleep, but I didn’t- I’m sorry I didn’t tell you. I just-”

Dream tilts his chin and captures George’s mouth in a kiss. George melts into him, lashes brushing against Dream’s cheek as he closes his eyes.

Blue violets open up in the light of the moon, the sky bleeds orange, and the stars explode all at once. Dream’s heart swells with emotion as he pulls away. Tears glisten in George’s eyes.

“There was so much blood,” George tells him shakily. “I didn’t know- I did the best I could. I have to reapply the ointment in a little, but you- you’ll be okay. Nasty bite, what was it?”

“Inferi,” Dream starts but a wave of nausea overcomes him.

He sees the waves crashing against the base of the cave and feels dizzy, slumping over.

“No, no, Dream,” George pleads. “It’s okay, we can talk about it later, just stay with me.”

George. He’s with George.

“I’m with you,” Dream whispers. “Just tired. Where are we? Where have you been?”

“We’re in Greece,” George says, pulling Dream upright and reaching for the bowl. “I’m gonna apply this, it might feel a little cold, but it stops the flesh from being so tender.”

Dream nods, watches as George scoops something purple onto two of his fingers to apply to his back.

“We’re right on the coast, there’s a little village down there. I built this house- well, it was abandoned and I magicked it better. I’ve been running a little apothecary on a cart in the village, been doing alright,” George continues.

Dream hisses at the coolness of the concoction, but it alleviates the pain.

“Nobody comes out here,” George tells him. “I’m not finished renovating, was waiting for you to come help with our bedroom.”

Our bedroom. He can’t help but smile.

“You’re all dopey again,” George sighs. “I’m going to get you something to eat.”

“Not dopey,” Dream protests. “Just happy. Sit with me?”

After George promises to return as soon as he can, Dream lets him go. He returns shortly after with another bowl and a thin blanket.

“It’s really nice here,” George says nervously. “Once you’re better you can look at the whole house, and change anything you want. I think I’m just going to continue with the apothecary, if that’s alright, but don’t feel like you have to work. I mean, I think we’re—”

“George.”

George stops talking and looks at Dream, turning red. “I missed you.”

Dream smiles as George shifts to his knees to reapply bandages.

“Riddle can’t- won’t be able to find us,” Dream breathes. “He thinks I’m dead, and I- We made an unbreakable vow, and I kept up my end of the bargain, and in exchange, he can’t hurt you.”

George’s expression is confused. “What?”

“Riddle made me take an unbreakable vow, where in exchange for the thing he wanted me to do, I’d get to ask for one thing. I asked for him to leave you alone.”

George immediately turns furious. “And why would you ask this?”

“To keep you safe,” Dream states obviously.

George feeds him a spoon of what tastes like mashed potatoes.

“What about you?” George asks, and Dream can practically hear his brain buzzing. “What if he comes looking for you?”

“Well, it’s a good thing I’m never leaving your side,” Dream says with a smile.

George inhales, exhales, closes his eyes. Dream copies him, tries to feel what he’s feeling.

“I have Patches,” George finally says. “She’s missed you. She’ll only sleep on your old robes.”

Dream immediately begins to look around. He’d given her to George after they’d graduated.

“She’s not inside, been trying to keep her away from this room since you- I don’t wanna stress her out,” George explains softly.

Dream beckons him closer and kisses the corner of his mouth. George closes his eyes and fights a smile. Dream could stay like this forever. Both of them, in this little room, *their* little room. It sinks in.

They’re safe.

“Can we sleep?” Dream asks. “Can you hold me?”

George wordlessly places the odd medical paraphernalia scattered around the cot on the floor, and lies down parallel to him. He gently pulls Dream forward so that they’re chest to chest, before shifting him down so that Dream can rest his head on George’s torso.

The steady beating of George’s heart acts as a lullaby. Sleep comes easy for the first time in

months.

The next day, Dream finally musters up the energy to take a look around the house. His arms still hurt, but George applies the ointment every hour religiously, and the pain begins to fade in the afternoon. It's different from Hogwarts. George likes to collect things, Dream learns.

Seashells from the beach, broken bucket handles, shiny pieces of glass. It lines the windowsills.

"My cat used to try and knock all of it to the floor," George says, frowning at her as she sits on the windowsill before softening.

His cat- their cat, now, Dream supposes- blinks at him slowly before jumping at George. Seeing her perched up on his shoulder makes Dream feel nostalgic.

"Where's Patches?" He asks, leaning over to see if he can catch her hiding somewhere.

"She likes to sit in the garden," George tells him. "Basks in the sun in the afternoon."

Of course she does.

"How long was I out?" Dream asks curiously.

"You were sort of half awake at times, enough that I could make you drink some water. Yesterday was four days."

Four days.

George walks towards the door by the pantry and opens it. He looks back at Dream and smiles softly. "Come on outside."

Dream steps outside to see that George has laid out a few stones between different sections of medicinal plants. Patches lays down on the one in the middle, basking in the sun.

Dream calls out to her and she bolts to his feet.

"Don't climb him," George tells her sternly. "He's delicate."

Patches stares at him for a moment before pouncing on Dream's leg. Dream hisses in pain, stumbling backwards before George takes Patches into his arms, holding her up for Dream.

"Hello," Dream whispers with a smile, pressing his forehead to hers. "Missed you."

George wraps a hand around his waist firmly, like he's afraid Dream will topple over if he doesn't hold him up. It feels domestic; the three of them stood in the yard of their house.

Their house, Dream thinks again. Something good blooms in his chest.

-

It hasn't even been a full two days of consciousness when he gets his next great idea. George is pouring a silver liquid into a mortar of crushed fig, frowning in an attempt to concentrate.

"George?"

"Yes?"

"Let's get married."

George spills a healthy amount of the liquid into the bowl by accident. It glows for a moment.

"Me?"

"No, the George behind you," Dream deadpans. "Yes, you. Me and you."

George stares at him, wide eyed. "We don't- I haven't gotten us anything yet, and you're still healing."

"So?" Dream asks as he stands and walks over to him, leaning against the kitchen counter. "We don't have to *have* anything, unless there's anything in particular you want. Let's do it today."

"I have work, and I want to try healing your arm later," George justifies. "We can only get married once, Dream, we have to do it properly."

Dream almost laughs at this. "According to who?"

George considers this and shrugs.

They can't exactly waltz into a chapel and get married there. Dream doubts that they *would* even if they could. Neither of them have made friends here yet that they trust enough to tell; there's nobody to invite.

"What's the point of marriage, anyways?" Dream wonders aloud as George's cat hops onto the counter and tries to stick a paw in the potion.

Dream holds her back.

"Covenant between man, woman, and God," George tells him as he turns on the tap to wash his hands. "And we don't have the majority of those things, just the excess of one."

Dream thinks about what he said for a moment, and then snorts. "Clever."

He listens to the water run as George tries to rinse out the mortar.

"Well," Dream starts, "I don't see a reason why we can't marry today. I'll prepare dinner."

"Your arm is healing," George reminds him. "And we don't have rings."

"We can marry with rings again tomorrow," Dream tells him as he places his chin on George's shoulder. "We can get married every single day for the rest of our lives if we want."

The thought makes him giddy with excitement. It's not like anyone can stop them. It's *theirs*. Everything here that they're going to build, far away from everything else, was theirs.

George brings a hand up to Dream's cheek and presses a kiss to it exasperatedly. "Fine."

“I’m serious,” Dream tells him. “I’ll marry you every day.”

“I’ll marry you every day too, Dream,” George tells him, kissing him on the nose. “I’m getting us rings.”

“We don’t have to if we can’t afford it,” Dream reassures him. “We can get them later. Plus, I’ll get a job as soon as you’ll let me, so—”

“Rest,” George tells him sternly. “We’re only getting married if you rest. Don’t do anything today.”

Dream groans about how unethical it is to hold their relationship hostage over his recovery and George spoons concoctions into little bottles. George leaves his wand in the house, tells Dream that the place is charmed beyond measure to prevent anyone other than them from getting in, and that there’s bread in the cellar.

George doesn’t return until late in the night. Dream spends the day moping around and attempting to transfigure bottle caps into rings, twine into ribbons. He hangs them around the kitchen and decides to lie to George about using magic to do it.

He worries when it begins to inch towards ten o’clock, and contemplates going to the village to check. He doesn’t know where the village is, but he’s sure he could figure it out. He’s about to start looking for shoes when George throws the door open, panting.

“Sorry,” he says in between breaths. “I was looking for rings, but there weren’t any good ones. And then, I got distracted with the grapes—” he holds up a vine of grapes “because the bastard was trying to rip me off—”

“I drew a bath for you, and transfigured some of your robes nicer,” Dream tells him softly, taking the grapes from him. “Go get dressed.”

“It’s all dark, I’m sorry,” George says sadly. “We can postpone—”

“If you don’t want to today, we don’t have to,” Dream reassures him.

It isn’t the end of the world. He understands if this symbolizes something different to George, and he’d wait until the day before he was on his deathbed if it came down to it. For George, anything.

“I do want to today,” George rushes to say. “I just want it to be good. How’s your arm?”
“It’s a lot better, just can’t lift much up,” Dream promises. “I even hung up the decorations in the kitchen by myself.”

He can’t lie to George.

“Decorations?” George inquires, standing on his tiptoes to steal a glimpse.

“No, go take a bath and get dressed,” Dream laughs. “I’ll see you at fifteen past ten.”

He enchantments the candles to float in the kitchen before slipping into his makeshift dress robes as well. When George emerges, grinning cheek to cheek and holding a bouquet of aster flowers, Dream’s heart stops beating in his chest for a moment.

“You’ve killed me, George,” he mutters, taking his hand. “You’ve demolished me.”

“Dream,” George starts, voice softening as his eyes glisten with emotion. “I can’t believe- I’m so happy right now.”

“I’m so happy too,” Dream whispers, wrapping his arms around him, rocking the two of them back and forth. “Happiest I’ve ever been.”

The crickets sing softly. Something scratches at the door, and Dream opens it to let their cats in.

He shows George the rings, and George laughs so hard that he cries, and Dream cries because George cries.

“Remember when you said you wanted to marry me when it was sunny?” George asks as he slips the ring onto Dream’s finger.

Dream laughs, leaning forward to steal a kiss, but George stops him.

“Wait till the end,” George scolds.

“Did you want it to be sunny?” Dream asks. “We can wait.”

“No we can’t,” George states matter of factly. “It doesn’t matter. Like you said, we can get married again in the morning.”

“Again,” Dream repeats, as he takes a ring and slips it onto George’s finger with trembling hands. “Every single day, forever.”

“Well, I’m sure you’ll get sick of it after a week or two,” George says with a grin, finally, finally allowing Dream to kiss him properly.

Dream thinks George must be insane if he thinks he could ever get sick of this.

“Never,” he promises. “Never ever, George.”

They rock back and forth in silence, and Dream wants to stay like this forever. There’s a lot more he wants to do, a lot more he wants to know.

“What was it like here, while I was gone?” he asks.

“Empty,” George admits. “There isn’t much to do. Sapnap wrote to me for the first little bit, but I suppose he’s busy. I told him not to, in case things got worse.”

“Did he know I was coming here?” Dream asks, hands shamelessly gripping George’s waist as tight as he can, like he’ll disappear if he doesn’t.

George shakes his head no. “Wasn’t sure if you’d want me to.”

“I think it’s better if we don’t,” Dream tells him sadly. “Safer for everyone if we just pretend I died.”

“The sea isn’t too far from here,” George tells him after a moment of silence. “We can go see it if you’d like.”

All Dream can think of is the violence of the water, the feeling of stone against his knees, liquid fire over his skin.

“Not now,” Dream pleads. “Not ready.”

“Okay,” George gently says. “We don’t have to go yet. Or ever, if you don’t want to. There’s a lot of things here we can see. We’ll go once I’m sure you’re better.”

George presses himself against Dream tighter, like the two of them could melt into each other if they tried hard enough.

“Can I help with the apothecary?” Dream asks quietly. “I don’t want to just sit here forever.”

“As soon as you’re better,” George promises.

It slots into place very nicely. The things they’ve wanted for, things Dream didn’t even dare think about while he was with the rest of them back at their old home, are in front of them. It’s quaint and provides no opportunity for glory.

It’s perfect.

“Dream,” George whispers before he kisses him firmly. “I love you. Thank you for loving me too.”

“I love you, George,” Dream repeats, and it feels like a promise.

“My boy,” George laughs as tears roll down his cheeks. “My boy, forever and ever.”

Nobody is here to see it. Perhaps nobody ever will. Dream almost doesn’t want anyone to.

Everything else he’s ever done has been for everyone else. He tried to be a soldier, tried to be a better son, tried to be anybody but himself. He hadn’t known unconditional *anything* until he met George.

He loves George.

When George looks at him, like he’s the one that hung the stars instead of just the one that hung the ribbon on the cabinets, he knows that George loves him too.

They deserve this. Some semblance of peace, some fresh air, the rest of their lives to process what happened before everything happened at once.

There was power and fame and respect. They would tangle themselves together and rise to unachievable heights as people tried to catch them in between their fingers. Dream realizes that people will fight for those things forever.

They can have those things, Dream decides. He almost feels bad for them.

This, he thinks when he looks at George who’s looking at him; flushed red, just as lovely and good as the day he met him.

George laughs as he stands on his tippy toes, spinning Dream around.

This is better, Dream thinks as he pulls George closer, kisses him over and over and over. *This is mine.*

sike lmfao

[click here 2 see art for this fic by emlarrr25](#)

[click here 2 see art for this fic by sarasophieeeee](#)

everyone who guessed the portkey PLEASE have my whole heart <333 I haven't responded to comments yet on the last chapter because I feared I would give away what happened, but I will soon. I was ecstatic when people figured out the Portkey though. makes me feel like I'm doing my job.

SIDENOTE wouldn't it have been so fucking stupid if i killed dream. like what the fuck did we do all this bullshit for then

Enough about dnf though let's talk about me. im going to get a concerning amount of emotional. thank you for reading :((thank you thank you thank you

I don't know if I've told this story already in the author's notes before but I originally came up with and mapped most of the concept out when I was 13 (with OCs) but I never got around to finishing it and then I moved away from narrative writing and it always irked me a little that I never bothered to write it? Which i guess is odd but i thought about it a lot.

Then i started writing an ao3 and i was like hmm maybe i WILL do this. As a little 10k words at most thing. Then i couldn't help myself and did all this

admittedly, I had not consumed Harry Potter content in a while at the time I started writing lol - I have spent a concerning amount of time on Harry Potter wiki trying to remember what the fuck went down, but it was honestly a lot of fun :) kind of between crossroads in my life right now so getting to escape back to it the way I did when I was younger is kind of sick. didn't expect many people at all to read it, more of a passion project than anything. But like, holy fucking shit?? I'm so happy to see other people enjoy it too.

I'm always just blown away by the fact people can read my stuff even though I'm the one sitting here posting it lol. The fact people take time out of their days to read and even leave comments on my silly little stories means a lot to me :) so big thank you to everyone that theorizes and comments on every chapter (or just commented at all) I cherish your thoughts so so much. Even if you've just been a silent reader, thank you for reading :) (come say hi in the comments if you want!)

MAN. IM JUST HAPPY TO BE HERE :)) finishing this feels like I sort of fulfilled that promise to my 13 year old self to write it so that's kind of sick (which is an embarrassing thing to share but honestly i am past caring. Catalyst readers you are all my inner circle and parasocial best friends. I feel like we are a little bookclub/secret society. Us against everyone)

Can you believe how emotional i am getting over minecraft youtuber harry potter fanfiction this is ridiculous If you told me i would be doing this a year ago i would've spit on you.

ALSO. THIS STORY IS COMPLETELY CANON COMPLIANT. GOD IT WAS A BITCH SOMETIMES TO FIGURE OUT, BUT IT TURNED OUT!!!! I have AGONIZED over chapter 18 for ages - please feel free to ask me anything about the universe or the canon compliancy or character design or anything if you're curious lol I will probably talk your ear off though.

Fun fact I wasn't originally going to include them getting married but I am a huge sucker for forever love and the reclamation of marriage as a non-religious thing and all that bullshit so. there. They get to play house forever. Good for them

IF you want to hold me both tenderly AND reassuringly you could user sub to me but only if you are

1. okay with me making typos in the title of fics when the initial email of my posting goes up, and;
2. you promise not to tattle in the comments (/lh)

PLAYLIST: [CATALYST PLAYLIST](#)

thank you all so much for reading :) hope to see you around <3

- angelbeachcat !

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End Notes

EDIT (July 8th 2022): hii this has just been on the conscious for a little so i thought i would just pop in an preface: i know that it's widely accepted that pureblood/halfblood/muggleborn discrimination is a metaphor for racism and i just want to formally say that that's not a theme or idea that I think is appropriate to touch on considering the medium and the fact this is real person fiction. i intended to portray themes surrounding religious (or cultural) indoctrination and so far i haven't had anyone say that this wasn't clear in the portrayal, but i figured i would just clarify incase anyone was wondering or had any doubts.

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